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OF NEW SOUTH WALES

INTIMATE LIFE STORY OF THE DUCHESS OF KENT

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Beginning the Intimate Life Story of

THE DUCHESS OF KENT

Told for the first time and presented with the personal approval of Her Royal Highness.

The Australian Women's Weekly is proud to present this week the first chapters of the intimate life story of Her Royal Highness the Duchess of Kent.

The introduction gives a vivid, tender, homely picture of the Duchess and her husband and children.

It is one of the most human documents ever written, for it reflects the happy, ideal home life so dear to people all over the world.

By BARONESS HELENA VON DER HOVEN

"TINKER, tailor, soldier, sailor . . ."

Where is the girl who has not repeated these magic words so full of fascination for every girlish heart?

And yet when we see this or that public character making a speech at the opening of a bazaar, standing officially at the inspection of scouts, or smiling sympathetically when visiting a hospital we see them only as they strike us on this particular picture—beautiful or otherwise, and we forget that they, too, are human.

They, too, have another side to their lives. They have their joys and sorrows, their jokes and their dreams, for, as I have just said, every woman especially has her dreams and they are usually the same.

Let us transport ourselves into the home of one of those public characters, a beautiful young woman who has recently come into our public life. We see her lovely and smiling, performing social duties allotted to her. We know she is always beautifully dressed and we remember her as a radiant bride when she slowly walked up the aisle of Westminster Abbey on the arm of her father.

Is she happy now, we wonder? What is her home like? Does she love children? What are her ideals of family life? . . .

A CHARMING HOME study of the Duchess of Kent, whose life story begins this week. —Photo by Cecil Beaton.

WILL you picture a room with soft pastel colorings, easy chairs and shaded lamps? A large fireplace occupies the centre of one wall and over it hangs the portrait of a beautiful woman, bearing a striking resemblance to the owner of the room. On the table at the opposite side of the room the place of honor is occupied by another portrait.

This time it is the face of someone beloved and admired by every British heart—Queen Mary.

On the writing-table, covered with snapshots and intimate photographs, we quickly spot the smiling features of a young man in a soft folding frame. Yes, we know why this frame has been chosen: it folds easily and can accompany the owner on her travels and carry with it the beloved features.

A little boy with curly hair laughs and pouts at us in turns from different angles, and there is a sweet, crumpled baby's face sleeping peacefully among wisps of satin and lace.

There is the beautiful young woman herself with other young women like her. There are more children and more photographs. A few books and albums lie about on the tables. Here is a half-finished piece of needlework, there a few songs. Numerous ornaments stand on the side-tables. They all have their characteristics, they all have significance.

They are not knick-knacks that money can buy: those are little treasures picked up in the course of travel; these are relics gathered from parts of the British Empire.

Here is a green jade Chinese elephant and there a Russian enamel cigarette-case, and here on a table near one of those cosy armchairs by the fire is a small flask with smelling-salts, and on it the simple inscription in French: "Ton parfum me charme." How Parisian, but how significant!

Happy, Happy Pair

THERE is no door in this room, only two windows which at this time of the day are covered with soft curtains. One wall is dedicated to books which line the shelves to the high ceiling. You recognise the favorite classics in leather-bound editions, and there in that corner at the end of the room our modern novels and books of the day.

You see they are no mere ornaments: they are friends and companions. The person who collected them is a reader and a thinker, and you wonder who it is.

There she is in that cosy armchair, and opposite her, with his legs well stretched out towards the bright fire, you will soon recognise the young man from the smiling photograph.

He is smiling now as his gaze rests on the beautiful young woman who is finishing a quilt embroidery cushion-cover for this very room.

A bustle is heard outside. Patter, patter! Small sturdy feet clamber down the stairs. A squeal of delight and a merry laugh. The books on the shelf slowly begin to move. The sheives part and the wall opens to form a doorway in which appear a nanny and a little curly-haired boy.

The tea-things are cleared away and this is his time. For, whatever their social engagements, the young parents try to keep an hour to play with their little son.

Children's Hour

HE climbs over his father as any other little boy would do. He tries to pull his hair. He squeals with delight if he achieves this tremendous feat of bravery and climbs down to take refuge in his mother's arms, where he laughs triumphantly and plays bo-peep from under the soft white hand which strokes the golden locks.

Presently, as all little boys do, he gets a little excited and rough. He pulls at the sleeve of his mother's cream satin blouse; he tugs at her black skirt.

"Take care or he'll pull you to pieces," warns the young man smilingly as any other ordinary young man would do, and the young woman laughs happily, readjusting her garments, and hugs a little tighter the little pink-and-white culprit who by now is feeling very tired and sleepy.

It is time to ring for nanny to take him to bed and to go up to the nursery to kiss that sleeping little baby girl who is too young yet to come and share in her brother's hour.

THAT is the glimpse which privileged friends have of the home life at 3 Belgrave Square, and of the smiling Duke of Kent and his beautiful young wife who, as radiant Princess Marina, pronounced the sacred words, "I will," at the altar of Westminster Abbey.

Her clear young voice with a pure English accent was broadcast throughout the Empire and found its way to the hearts of all those who heard it for the first time.

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Let's Talk Of Interesting People

—Vaile.

Holds Important Post

PROFESSOR J. A. PRESCOTT, who has been appointed Director of the Waite Agricultural Research Institute, Urrbrae, South Australia, in succession to Professor A. E. V. Richardson, has been connected with that institute since its foundation in 1924. He has occupied the position of Waite Professor of Agricultural Chemistry since that time. Professor Prescott has done wide research work with soils in Egypt with the Royal Agricultural Society and also in many parts of Australia.

Dramatised Cookery

MISS GWEN HUGHES, who left Melbourne five years ago with a number of domestic plays written to demonstrate in a practical way the correct values of food and diet, rewrote them to suit English conditions, and toured England with them. The cooking was actually done on the stage during the action of the brief plays.

In summer time she went to Central Europe to study music, dancing, and politics.

Now she has returned to Australia with plays and cookery dramas and hopes to present them here.

Decorating Consultant

MRS. WARREN DELANO ROBINS, widow of a former United States Minister to Canada, was appointed recently to the newly-created post of decorating consultant to the State Department in the United States. Mrs. Robins will supervise the furnishing and decoration of United States Embassies at home and abroad. One of her inflexible rules will be that every piece of furniture and upholstery used in this manner must be made in the United States.

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I'VE JUST *Talked* TO STALIN

By . . .
COUNT PAUL VASSILI
Former well-known Russian diplomat, author of "Behind the Veil of The Russian Court."

☆ ☆

Stalin, the Iron Man of Russia and one of the world's mysterious figures, is in the public spotlight again because of the extraordinary trials and confessions of public leaders in Russia on charges of conspiring for his down fall.

Here is a vivid personal impression of the Russian dictator told by a Russian exile, who returned to his homeland after 23 years and interviewed Stalin.

It gives a contrasting picture of a lonesome and heartless chief behind a screen of terror guards . . . a devoted son to his mother . . . a good husband to the young wife he lost so tragically . . . a thoughtful father to her children.

Exclusive to The Australian Women's Weekly

I COULD not help being deeply moved when I was ushered into the presence of the cruel-eyed, grim-mouthed mystery man who now rules all Russia, the powerful Dictator before whom 250,000,000 people trembled.

The last time I had been there was a few days after the breaking out of the World War, when Nicholas II had come to the ancient Russian capital to formally announce the opening of hostilities.

It is not easy to be received by Stalin. He does not care for visitors, and has an almost morbid horror of publicity. Which, perhaps, is one reason why there are such frequent reports that he lives in abject terror of attempts against his life.

To one who knows something of Stalin, or who has met him, the idea that he could be in terror is hard to accept.

The man who killed with his own hand in his early revolutionary days, who has passed through the ordeals and experiences of Stalin, could not possibly bow to fear. In addition he is an Oriental, with that tinge of fatalism in his character that is inseparably Oriental.

Life for him has no importance, neither his own nor that of others, as he has so often proved.

I did not ask to see Stalin in the capacity of a newspaper interviewer, and he had reasons for wishing to see me. So I found few obstacles in my path.

At the outer gate of the Kremlin I had shown my permit to the soldier on guard.

An officer was called to scrutinise it, and I was given into the care of another soldier who led me across the inner courtyard, then into the palace through the corridors and private apartments of the former Czars to the door of Stalin's office. Silently, the soldier motioned that I was to go inside.

I found myself in the presence of the Dictator—the mystery man of Europe's grim question mark, the Soviet Republic.

Stalin produces an impression of force and power. The room in which he works adds to this.

It had once been the study of the Czar, but the rich damask curtains and wall hangings that once adorned it have been taken down, and the white-washed walls and absence of ornament make the room appear much more vast than it really is.

Strong Personality

THERE is an immense desk, with a few papers and books arranged on it in orderly fashion, five or six telephones, and a long row of bells placed one next to the other. There are two chairs. Stalin's, and another one standing opposite, on the other side of the desk; a filing cabinet, and that is all.

The desk is placed in the middle of the room, disproving the stories that Stalin "sits with his back to the wall at the far end of a room which is virtually a sealed vault."

When I was introduced into the presence of the Dictator, he rose from his chair, without, however, leaving it, and greeted me politely. He had read a translation of one of my books, and this served us both as an informal introduction. But this first sight of him was already a surprise. Stalin from his pictures gives the impression of being gigantically tall.

In reality, this is not at all the case. He is of quite ordinary height, but the head and shoulders are quite enormous. His hair is thick and curly, with a few grey streaks here and there, especially on the temples.

Stalin's eyes peer from under bushy brows, and like his mouth are distinctly Oriental; filled with Eastern cunning and cruelty.

HIS voice is one of the amazing points in his personality. One would expect it to be rough, but on the contrary it is soft—too soft, in fact.

The disagreeable part about the Dictator's voice is its Georgian accent that brings to mind too sweet cakes or candy. It takes one a few minutes to get used to it.

As I have said, he got up when he saw me. He greeted me with the words, "I am very happy to meet you, Count." This phrase startled me.

The last thing which I had expected was to be addressed by my title in the land which had banned all titles and distinction.

But I repressed my astonishment, and replied that I was pleased, indeed, to find myself in the presence of one who occupied such an important place in the world, a remark which made Stalin smile.

When he smiles, his entire face is illuminated, and tiny wrinkles play about the corners of his eyes.

We talked of many things, talked like two people discussing subjects upon which we were not in accord.

Stalin has a stronger faith in Russia than anyone I have ever met. He wants to see Russia great and powerful; he hopes she will reach that point before he disappears.

I asked the Dictator point-blank whether he wanted Russia to use force against other nations if necessary.

"Why should I want such a thing?" he asked. "War always spells ruin for all those who engage in it, whether vanquished or triumphant. War retards every industrial and commercial development, no matter how speedily ammunition factories may work.

"No man having the responsibility to decide whether or not his country should enter into war can, without pause, start a conflagration, if only for the reason that war always brings consequences that are impossible to foresee.

Continued on Page 33

GLIMPSES OF STALIN, applauded and cheered—and feared—by the men, women and children of Russia.

Give Yourself a Screen Test!

DO you want to size up your screen prospects for yourself?

You can, by submitting yourself to the fascinating test explained in the special article on page 2 of the Movie World section of this issue of The Australian Women's Weekly.

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GARBO ENCHANTED *at* CAPRI

GARBO AND A GLIMPSE of the beautiful isle of Capri, visited by the famous star and Stokowski on their mysterious, romantic holiday, which reports say will culminate in their marriage this week.

STOKOWSKI, "a champion of the unorthodox in music." In an unorthodox way he announced his marriage.

Stokowski's love songs for star whom he says he will marry

By Beam Wireless from MARY ST. CLAIRE—from Naples

How film people love secrecy and mystery!

All Naples believes that Greta Garbo and Leopold Stokowski will be married here this week, but neither of them will admit anything.

I am writing this message a few days before it will appear in print, but this much is certain—people have seen Garbo, ecstatically happy, strolling hand in hand with Stokowski, he humming a love song.

DURING the first week of their stay at Ravello the villa was barricaded against visitors.

But gossip from servants drifted out, and the world soon knew that the two principal guests were the great film star and the famous conductor. Once this secret was disclosed Garbo and Stokowski abandoned their seclusion and began to appear in public.

But they steadfastly continued to refuse to discuss "private affairs."

Stokowski went so far as to admit that he is going to marry his companion, but would not admit that his companion is the glamorous star.

It is believed here that the marriage will take place at Milan this week.

Wallace Beery has arrived at Cannes, and it is said that he is going to Italy to act as best man, but this he would neither admit nor deny.

Garbo appears at this ancient resort, within the shadow of the lava-coated slopes of Vesuvius, with its eternal feather of smoke, clad in mannish-cut grey flannel trousers, with brilliant blue or yellow sweaters.

Blue goes well with her blonde shoulder-length hair and yellow sets off her deep suntan.

When the weather is warm she sunbathes in a gay bandanna halter-necked suit to acquire an even tan on her shapely back and shoulders.

During afternon walks through the town she wears pleated white silk skirts, navy-blue cotton fabric blouses, tailored like a man's vest and fastened with white leather buttons.

If the weather is threatening she carries a featherweight camel-hair coat of natural beige color.

She seldom wears a hat, generally tying her hair with a gaily-colored handkerchief or wearing a beret. Her shoes are of sporty low-heeled type.

She has ordered a number of evening gowns from Milan, apparently anticipating a long stay in Italy.

When they are out walking Garbo and Stokowski have been observed strolling hand-in-hand, he humming a love-song. Both appear ecstatically happy.

Garbo broke her habitual silence only when she spoke to the hotel-keeper's daughter of her enchantment with this coast, of lovers, Capri, Amalfi, and Ravello, making it easy to perceive that she is in love with art, beauty, and, above all, the life which she is sharing with "The Maestro," Stokowski, whose slim, straight athletic figure denies his 56 years.

Stokowski's mother, who lives with her maid in a small villa in a London suburb, Golder's Green, awaits news of the marriage.

"The last I heard of my son," she said, "he was going to Italy. I know all about his divorce last Christmas, but he has not mentioned Garbo to me. When the time comes I shall hear."

Garbo's Earnings

APART from Stokowski, Garbo numbers among her friends Sigvard Bernadotte, a son of the King of Sweden, who, two or three years ago, renounced all claim to the throne, and went to Hollywood, where he is now an associate director.

Leif Erikson is another. He is an actor who played with her in "Marie Walewska." She is frendly, too, with Charles Boyer, who played opposite her in that picture.

But most of her friends are little-known people, usually Swedish people living in Hollywood.

Her earnings are of the highest. She gets paid per picture, not on a salary basis. In 1936 she earned £88,000.

Stokowski is noted for his readiness to champion some slightly unorthodox cause or to reverse precedent—and it is a rule he seems to be applying to his new romance. He announced his wedding plans. Usually it is the bride's privilege.

His unorthodoxy revealed itself when he started conducting rehearsals from a saddle because it permitted him to rest, and, at the same time, gave freedom of movement.

He does not hesitate to "bawl out" his audiences, and engages in perennial tiffs and arguments with his board of directors.

Always the arguments go in his favor. In business and socially he seems irresistible.

But here his career and its turbulence has no part.

To Naples he and Garbo are simply a man and a woman in love.

Her summer sports clothes used to have a washed-out look

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No Place for a Woman

An unusual romance of the great snow wastes in which the adventure of the trails proved stronger than a woman's charms.

A Complete Short Story

By . . .

SEWELL P. WRIGHT

THE heat from the squat, ugly old stove, which burned and purred like a great cat when it was full of blazing wood, had melted the frost in the middle of the window and changed it into wavily transparent ice.

Sitting behind the ancient desk of the Northern Prince Hotel, Alma Norris watched, through the clear spot, the man who had just shouted to stop a team of five panting dogs. Good huskies they were, too; slant-eyed, shaggy devils, with broad deep chests and bushy tails held high.

"Ho!" the man commanded as he leaped off the packed toboggan. "Hear that, Nick? Ho! You start a fight, and I'll slaughter you." He flipped the coiling lash of his whip within an inch of his lead dog's ear, but the dog didn't move.

Alma smiled knowingly to herself. Here was a man whose bark was worse than his bite. His dogs respected him, but they weren't afraid of him. Alma had never trusted a man whose dogs cringed at his every word or movement the way George's dogs had . . . But wasn't she ever going to forget that?

The door opened, frosty hinges creaking, and the man entered the hotel office, his dog-whip dangling in careless loops. Alma noticed for the first time that he limped.

He nodded carelessly, and then, as their glances met, "Good afternoon, miss," he amended. "You'll have to pardon the bush-rat manners. Got a bed for me and a place for the dogs?" He gestured easily towards the street.

"Hospitality for man and beast," nodded Alma. She liked the way he had smiled when he mentioned bush-rat manners. It was a quick, generous smile that lit up his blue eyes, and made the snow-wrinkles at the outer corners show up noticeably for just an instant. "The kennels are at the back; shall I have Joe tie up the dogs, or——"

"I DON'T know Joe, but he's probably all right, and I wouldn't like to see him fooling around that string of savages. They have ideas of their own about who should put the harness on them, or take it off. I'll be back soon."

He had nice shoulders, Alma decided; lean, broad shoulders which swung a bit with the movements of his arms, in the body-rhythm of a man who spends most of his time on the trail. It was too bad he limped; he was the kind of man in whom a limp was conspicuous. In a very few minutes he returned.

"Tell Joe," he remarked, as he picked up the pen Alma handed him, "not to feed them. I'll attend to that later."

Alma watched him as he signed the battered dog-eared register. His hands were brown and hard; round the nails and across the knuckles were the harsh, unbeautiful marks of frost. "Bush-rat," he had called himself, and he looked the part, bent over the counter in his worn black fur coat, the hoar-frost melting into little sparkling drops upon the fringe of fur which framed his brown face, but he wrote firmly and quickly, "Rusty Clarke," and handed the pen back to Alma with a little nod of thanks.

"Thirteen is a nice room," remarked Alma, fingering the key. "You're not superstitious?"

Rusty Clarke grinned.

"As the devil," he said promptly. "For instance, I believe this is one of my lucky days."

"Why?"

"Because I happened to hit the tracks close to the Northern Prince Hotel, instead of somewhere else along the line." The frank admiration in his eyes made his meaning perfectly clear.

"I see," Alma said coolly. "Will room thirteen be satisfactory?"

"Perfectly." Ordinarily, when Alma spoke in the tone of voice she had just used, fresh young men muttered and looked sheepish. But not Rusty Clarke. He was laughing at her silently, with his eyes.

"I'll show you the room, Mr. Clarke." Alma led the way up the narrow stairs with their worn, splintery steps. She had always wanted a carpet for those stairs, but had never been able to afford it. Perhaps next year . . . That was the way so many things stood.

Rusty Clarke followed her, his pack dangling loosely from one shoulder. Alma wondered if he was still laughing at her with his eyes.

The Northern Prince, for all its imposing name, was simply a two-storied, barn-like structure with small rooms on the second floor, arranged along each side of the narrow hall which ran the length of the building. Alma stopped before No. 13 and opened the door.

"Will this be all right, Mr. Clarke?"

The man glanced round the room in frank surprise.

"What is it—your private boudoir?"

"Hardly," Alma informed him in that same cool, impersonal voice. She surveyed the little cubicle with a certain satisfaction, however. It wasn't as rough as one would expect to find in a little bush town hotel.

The walls were done in cream, and the furniture had been painted pale green. The well-scrubbed floor was bare, save for a tawny timber-wolf pelt stretched beside the bed. The single window had little crisp curtains of dotted Swiss muslin and on the walls were colorful pictures, clipped from magazines and framed in birch bark, its edges bound with stitchings of dyed porcupine quills. A couple of old Indian squaws had made them for a few pennies apiece.

"Bridal suite, then?" Rusty Clarke insisted on laughing at her.

"It's not a suite at all. It's a single room. Do you like it?"

"I WON'T know how to act in it. Tell me, are all the rooms in the place fixed up like this?" he added curiously.

"More or less. Is there anything you'd like?"

"I don't suppose there's a doctor in Triple Falls?"

"A doctor?"

"Yes. I'd like him to have a look at this foot of mine. I managed to get it in the way of a glancing axe, and I'm just a little worried that the frost may have got at it."

"Oh! I'm sorry, there isn't a doctor here. I'm not a bad nurse, however, and if there's anything I could do, I'd be glad to."

"Thanks," said Rusty Clarke gratefully. "I'll see how it looks, after a while, and let you know."

When Alma saw the wound, she bit her lips to keep from crying out. The jagged edges were black and heavily granulated, and the flesh for inches around was badly discolored. Walking on it must have been agony, but his limp had been just barely noticeable.

"What do you say?" he asked, drawing on his pipe. "Think I'll live through it?"

"Yes." Alma was vaguely annoyed by his flippancy. "But if you'd neglected it much longer it might very well have been serious."

"That's the chance you take. A bush-rat can't carry a retinue of doctors and nurses, you know."

"He can be careful."

"Have you ever had the opportunity to observe what an axe will do when it strikes a frozen knot of wood?"

"No."

"Well, it's interesting. You see before you the result of such a meeting."

"You were all alone?"

"Yes." Rusty stared at her with quizzical blue eyes. "Seventy miles from the tracks. But I've got a stout string of dogs."

"Trapping?"

Rusty shook his head. With his thick fur hood removed, it was easy to see how he had come by the name. His hair wasn't exactly red, but it wasn't exactly brown, either.

"Buying fur. Trapping gets on my nerves. The same string of little camps, over and over again."

Alma picked up a clean cloth which she had dipped in a basin of water, milky with antiseptic.

"This is going to hurt," she commented. "We'll have to clean the wound, and remove the granulation, before it will heal properly."

"Go ahead! Didn't I tell you this was my lucky day? You seem to be a very efficient nurse."

"We'll see about that later."

She felt the cords in his ankle tense as the strong solution bit into the injured flesh, but his eyes continued to smile at her encouragingly. His teeth didn't even tighten on the stem of his pipe.

"SO you think hitting the trail all by yourself is better than running a trap line over and over again?"

"Infinitely. You see, it's almost always a fresh trail; not the same old thing over and over again."

"But I should think you'd want a roof over your head—a place to come to when you're tired, and want to rest."

"Home, and all that sort of thing? I've tried it." There was a sudden sharpness, bitterness, in Rusty's voice. "But I wasn't there enough. She ran away with another man."

"Oh!" Alma hesitated an instant, and then went on with her bandaging. "I—I'm sorry," she added.

"Why?" he asked curiously.

"Because—well, it just seems to me such a pity. To be for ever roaming, without a roof over your head, and——"

"I have a tarpaulin; it makes a very good roof."

Alma shrugged.

"It doesn't make a home."

"You're romantic. All women are; too much so for their own good. That sort of thing doesn't always work out in practice as it does in theory."

"True," Alma nodded soberly. "I've tried it, too. But that doesn't mean that the whole idea's wrong."

"Your husband is—dead?" Rusty asked gravely.

Please turn to Page 36

Illustrated by WYNNE W. DAVIES

The long, lonely trails claimed Rusty, but in the background of his life was Alma, waiting patiently.

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An INFAMOUS ARMY

By... GEORGETTE HEYER

The Highland Brigade came marching through the Place in the first rays of the sunlight, pipe majors strutting ahead, huge fur headdresses nodding and kilts swinging.

The Story So Far:

ON the eve of war, the EARL OF WORTH, Army general, and his wife, JUDITH, the Countess, are in Brussels, where many English social lights have gathered.

Conspicuous by her beauty and wit is LADY BARBARA CHILDE, a widow, newly-engaged to COLONEL AUDLEY, brother of Worth, and aide-de-camp to the DUKE OF WELLINGTON.

Although the military situation is most tense, there is a plethora of parties and other gay functions, at one of which Barbara, through an indiscretion with a wealthy young dandy, SIR PEREGRINE TAVERNER, inspires much gossip, with the result that her fiance, Charles, demands that Sir Peregrine and his jealous wife leave Brussels. Barbara, when she learns this, in temper breaks off her engagement.

Charles transfers his attention to LUCY DEVENISH, wealthy young heiress, whom Judith is anxious for him to marry. Meanwhile Barbara retaliates by flirting more outrageously than ever, and her engagement to M. DE LAVISSE, a wealthy suitor, is anticipated.

At the DUCHESS OF RICHMOND'S ball on June 15 the long-expected news is announced that war has begun, casting a gloom over the brilliant assemblage.

NOW READ ON.

Illustrated by WYNNE W. DAVIES

"HALLO, Harry! You've got you wish, you see!"

"By Gad, haven't I just! I only came up to say good-bye and wish you luck. I'm off to Braine-le-Comte, you know. It's my first engagement. Lord, won't some of the fellows at home be green with envy!"

"Well, mind you capture an Eagle," said the Colonel, holding out his hand. "I daresay I shall run up against you some time or other, but in case I don't, the best of luck to you. Take care of yourself!"

Lord George Alastair came striding out of the ante-room behind them as Harry wrung the Colonel's hand. He merely nodded to the Colonel, but said curtly to his brother: "Are you off, Harry? I'll go with you as far as the centre of the town. I'm for Ninove. Where are you for?"

"Braine-le-Comte. You don't look very cheerful, I must say. Been bidding someone a tender farewell?"

"That's it; come along, now!"

"Wait a bit, here's Bab!"

Colonel Audley turned his head quickly, and saw Barbara coming across the room towards them. Her eyes were fixed on her brothers, but as though she were conscious of his gaze she glanced in his direction, and flushed.

Colonel Audley thrust a hand which he found to be shaking slightly in Lord Robert's arm, and walked away with him.

A few minutes later, Colonel Audley went up to Judith, and touched her arm, saying quietly: "I'm off, Judith. Tell Worth, will you? I haven't time to look for him."

She clasped his hands. "Oh, Charles! Where?"

"Only to Ath, with a message, but it's urgent. I'm not likely to return to Brussels to-night. Don't be alarmed, will you? You will see what a dressing we shall give Boney!"

The next instant he was gone, slipping out of the ballroom without any other leave-taking than a word to his hostess. Others followed him, but in spite of the many departures there seemed to be no empty places in the dining-room when the guests presently went in to supper.

Supper had hardly begun when the Prince of Orange came into the room, looking very serious. He went straight to the Duke, and bent over him, whispering in his ear.

A despatch had been brought in by one of his Aides-de-Camp from Baron Constant at Braine-le-Comte. It was dated as late as 10.30 p.m., and reported that Charleroi had fallen not two hours after Ziethen's solitary message had been sent off that morning. The French had advanced twenty miles into Belgian territory. The Prussians had been attacked at Sombreffe by Grouchy, with Vandamme's Corps in support, and had fallen back on Fleurus; Ney had pushed forward on the left to Frasnes, south of Quatre Bras, with an advance-guard of cavalry, but had encountered there Prince Bernhard of Saxe-Weimar, who, taking the law courageously into his own hands, had moved forward from Genappe with one Nassau battalion and a battery of horse-artillery. A skirmish had taken place, but Ney had apparently had insufficient infantry to risk an engagement. He had made some demonstrations, but the handful of troops opposed to him had held their ground, and at seven o'clock he had bivouacked for the night. Prince Bernhard had reported the affair immediately to General Perponcher, who, wisely ignoring the Duke's positive orders to assemble his division at Nivelles, had directed it instead on the hamlet and cross-roads at Quatre Bras.

The Duke listened to these tidings with an unmoved countenance. He saw that everyone in the room was watching him, and said in a loud voice: "Very well! I have no fresh orders to give. I advise your Royal Highness to go back to your quarters and to bed."

The Prince, whose air of suppressed excitement had escaped no one, withdrew; the Duke resumed his conversation. But the impression created by the Prince's reappearance was not to be banished; except among those who had no relatives engaged in the operations, conversation had become subdued, and faces that had worn smiles an hour earlier now looked a little haggard in the glare of the candlelight.

No one was surprised when the Duke went up to his host, saying cheerfully: "I think it's time for me to go to bed likewise." In the distance could be hard the ominous sound of bugles calling to arms; dancing seemed out of place; the Duke's departure was for most of those present a welcome sign of the party's breaking up. Wives exchanged nods with their husbands; mothers tried to catch heedless daughters' eyes; Georgiana Lennox stole away to help her brother March pack up.

The Duke said under his breath: "Have you a good map in the house, Richmond?"

Richmond nodded and led him to his study. The Duke shut the door and said abruptly: "Napoleon has humbugged me. He has gained twenty-four hours' march on me."

He walked over to the desk, and bent over the map Richmond had spread out on it, and studied it for a moment or two in silence.

Richmond stood watching him, startled by what he had said, and wondering a little that no anxiety should be apparent in his face. "What do you intend doing?" he asked presently.

"I've ordered the army to concentrate on Quatre Bras," replied his lordship. "But we shan't stop him there, and if so, I must fight him here." As he spoke, he drew his thumbnail across the map below the village of Waterloo, and straightened himself. "I'll be off now and get some sleep."

In the ballroom, a few determined couples were still dancing, but with the departure of the officers the zest had gone from the most carefree young female. Ladies were collecting their wraps, carriages were being called for, and a stream of guests was filing past the Duchess of Richmond, returning thanks, and taking leave.

Judith, who had gone upstairs to fetch her cloak, was startled on her way down again to encounter Barbara, her train caught over her arm, and in her face an expression of the most painful anxiety. She put out her hand impulsively, grasping Judith's wrist, and said in a strangled voice: "Charles! Where is he?"

"My brother-in-law left the ball before supper," replied Judith.

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THREE STRANGERS

Illustrated by FISCHER

She came out on to the platform and stood there patiently, looking inquiringly into my face. "What is it, please?" she asked softly.

Another fascinating story from our "Pulpit in the Grill Room" Series.

By E. PHILLIPS OPPENHEIM

IT was a typical luncheon-time crowd who were swarming in through the portals of the Milan Court, filling the small lounge and finding their places in the Grill Room beyond. I paused in my conversation with Louis, the omnipotent maitre d'hotel, to watch some of his apparently endless stream of clients. They were of all classes, from the politician hurrying along from Whitehall, the man of business descending from his taxi often flushed with excitement of money getting, a sprinkling from the theatrical world, a much larger and more motley crowd from the cinemas, and the usual nondescript medley of foreign residents in the hotel or casual visitors. It was a fascinating task sometimes to put them in their places.

It seemed easy to classify everybody until the three strangers pushed their way through the swing doors and stood within a yard of Louis' desk, looking around them curiously and with the air of having drifted into unfamiliar surroundings.

There was a friendly rivalry between Louis and me as to our ability to classify easily the various types who found their way into the kingdom of this most famous maitre d'hotel in London. In this case it was he who came to a conclusion more easily than I. He leaned forward with something more than his usual urbane smile. There was a touch of human kindness in his simply-asked question.

"Can I do anything for you, sir?" he asked the eldest of the three, a thin, white-haired gentleman in semi-ecclesiastical garb.

"You are very kind, sir," was the pleasant response. "We were intending to take our luncheon here, but the place seems very full."

"I can give you a table," Louis replied, beckoning to Jose. "Have you any preference as to its position?"

"We should like," the girl by his side suggested timidly, "a table somewhere near the one usually occupied by Mr. Marketin."

"Marketin?" Louis repeated, with some hesitation.

"You must know him very well," the girl continued. "We read in the paper only last week that he lunched here nearly every day."

"He is," her elderly companion ventured, "a great power in the cinema world."

I whispered in Louis' ear.

"I should let them have their own way," I suggested. "He can't bite their heads off."

"The papers said that he lunched here nearly every day," the girl repeated.

"Have you any acquaintance with Mr. Marketin, sir?" I inquired.

"I cannot say that we have," was the somewhat hesitating reply. "My daughter, however, read in this article she speaks of that Mr. Marketin was always looking for new types for the—er—cinema plays which he produces. I had the idea, perhaps, that I might venture to introduce myself."

My curiosity amounted to impertinence, but I persevered.

"On account of the young lady?" I asked.

"Oh, no," she replied promptly. "We never dreamed of such a thing. It is my brother here who wishes to go on the films. Everyone in our part of the world thinks that he ought to."

I looked at the young man who certainly had all the assurance which the other two lacked. He was dressed in a different fashion to them for the girl wore the clothes of a village dressmaker, but she could have worn a smock and remained a creature of grace.

Her brother wore what appeared to be a ready-made suit from the emporium of an outfitter in a market town, clothes of sporting cut which hung reasonably well upon his shapely figure, but which left him lacking the air of distinction certainly possessed by the other two.

"Forgive me if I seem inquisitive," I said, "but I was wondering how you proposed to approach Mr. Marketin if you haven't a letter to him."

"I myself have raised that question," the elderly gentleman remarked.

"Is he very terrifying?" the girl asked.

I hesitated.

"I scarcely know him," I confessed, "but I believe he has the reputation of being a little difficult. However," I said, feeling that I had gone far enough, "I wish you good fortune."

With a gesture of farewell I left them and went over to my table. A few minutes later I saw Jose usher them to their places. The elderly gentleman gave up his hat with reluctance to an insistent vestaire.

The girl, as she sat there facing me, smoothing her gloves and looking about her with awed interest, was, I realised, subtly but unquestionably attractive. Her boyish figure lost very little of its charm in the simple clothes she was wearing, her almost over large eyes were full of languid interest, her manner as she spoke first to her father and then to the young man was calm, but perfectly self-possessed. It was easy to see that it was she by her encouragement who was setting them both at their ease. She held the menu in her hand as one accustomed to order luncheons, and Jose received her commands and ventured upon several suggestions with his best air. A carafe of water was placed upon the table . . . I finished my cocktail, ordered my grilled sole with a Riz Diane to follow and made my way back to Louis' desk.

"I see your proteges have settled down," I remarked.

He looked at me with that benevolent smile once more upon his face.

"There is something that one might consider pathetic," he confided, "about that trio."

"Did they tell you their names?" I inquired.

"The gentleman's name is Spenser. He is not a clergyman as I thought but an ex-schoolmaster. I think that he has been persuaded to come to town by his daughter for the sake of her brother. They live in a village with about forty inhabitants on the edge of a moor in Devonshire, twenty miles from even a market town. The young man has a post in a bank. He has also the accent of the local school where he was educated. It is indeed a little pathetic."

"I hope Marketin will let them down lightly," I ventured.

Louis shrugged his shoulders.

"Marketin is a man of uncertain temper," he said. "For the rest, you know him as well as I do. If it had been the young lady who was anxious to go upon the films I think I should have tried to persuade them that Mr. Marketin was a stranger here."

"Why?" I asked.

"I DO not pretend at my time of life," Louis answered with a smile, "to be an infallible judge, but it is my opinion that the young lady, whose name, by-the-by, is Lorna, is far too attractive and too unaware of the fact to be drifting about in these circles with a scholarly simpleton and a conceited lout."

"What can one do?" I asked the presiding genius of the place.

He answered me literally.

"I—nothing," he admitted. "With you it is different. You have a bowing acquaintance with Marketin."

"No more than I can help," I muttered.

"Never mind—it is sufficient. You belong to the class with whom he is always seeking to ingratiate himself. I suggest that, out of kindness to those three strangers, before they have had an opportunity of making a faux pas, you go up to speak to him, and, finding them there, present them as acquaintances of yours."

I considered the matter without enthusiasm.

"I don't like putting myself under an obligation to Marketin," I objected.

"You need not," was the prompt reply. "He will be only too flattered at your addressing him."

I indulged in a little grimace, but, of course, I consented.

With my promise to Louis in mind I watched Marketin curiously when he made his appearance. He was a short, thickly-built man, who wore heavy tortoiseshell rimmed glasses and had a habit of doing everything in life at express speed.

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MANY a GOOD FISH

Complete Short Story

By

ANNE WORMSER

ALISON lay on her back on the raft, a set smile on her face and her inside churning about with the strength of her hatred. Her eyes, half-closed against the sun, were glued in fascination on the spectacle before her.

A slim, golden-tan figure was climbing the ladder to the twenty-foot board. Alison groaned.

"If she does a swallow-dive off there——"

The figure stood poised for a moment, hands extended in front, wisp of silk maillot gleaming in the sun, then rose smoothly and curved with a perfection that was poetry.

George Powers said in a detached manner: "An active young person," but Alison hardly heard him. The others cheered, and he saw Peter Baring reach down and catch at the diver's hand to help her up the steps.

That's how it was, all the time, now. You'd think they'd all gone crazy. This summer—which normally should have been a round of placid amusement—was nothing but an Olympic display.

And Peggy Bruce had done it. Peggy was to be found every day on the nine-hole course, and she played tournament tennis. Peggy had an album of photographs attesting to her mastery of skis, sailing dinghies and ice-skates. Peggy would undoubtedly prove adept, if the occasion presented itself, at jujitsu. And Alison wished with all her heart that Peggy was back in her own home where she belonged.

Alison had no objection to the crowd in general pursuing the newcomer and perpetually cheering. No objection at all. But it had come to the point when Peter—her Peter—whom she'd been skilfully preserving in a state of suspended ardor until she had made up her mind—it had come to the point where Peter not only led the chorus of applause, but had abandoned all previous enterprises to devote himself to Peggy.

Alison's outlook on life, usually sweetness itself, had become a curdled nightmare.

Peggy began to organise a game of water-polo.

"I hope she gets a black eye," Alison muttered.

George leaned back on his elbow. "All that energy," he mused, "is worthy of a better cause. Science harnesses Niagara Falls and seeks a use for the sun's rays. Why doesn't someone do something about that girl? I'm worn out with just being in the same place with her."

Dear loyal George! Alison turned and looked at him. Such a good sort. What a pity he was a shade too fat, a shade too easy going. What a pity he wasn't tall, with a gay and lovely smile. What a pity he wasn't in short Peter Baring instead of good old George.

There was a shout from the diving platform. Peggy and Peter were about to execute a complicated double effect. It was the last straw.

"I'm going in," Alison said shortly.

She dropped into the water and swam to the shore with loud and careless splashes. She climbed dripping up the steps and into her bathrobe. She flopped into her car and stepped on the starter viciously. It was depressingly apparent that her departure went unnoticed.

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Illustrated by VIRGIL

Alison—doggedly determined to be a good sport—was impelled to follow the rest of the hypnotised group.

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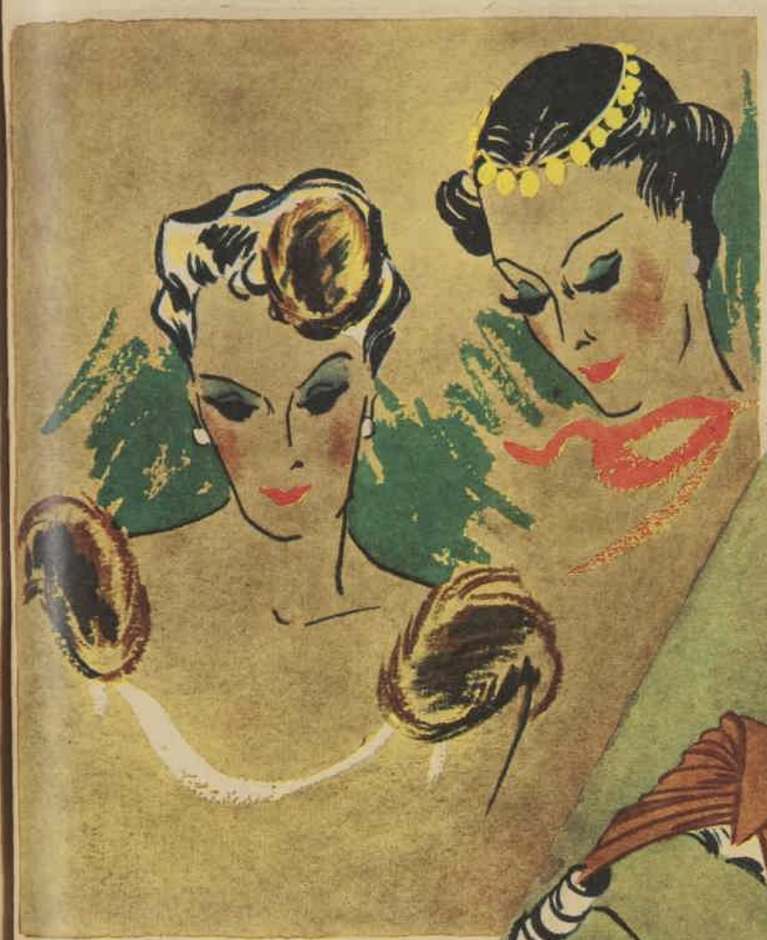
MARCH OF THE MODE by Rene

PERSONALITY . . .



●INDIVIDUAL TOUCHES for the coiffure: For the fair girl, a fluff of sable posed on the front of her hair which repeats the sable shoulder motifs on her slipper satin gown. For the brunette a necklet of gold coins circling the top of her head.

●GOLD KID evening slipper, showing lovely artistic lines in its design. A black antelope shoe, featuring new high peaked heel. The high line over the instep curls back in a scroll to show a gold kid lining.

● BROWN ANTELOPE swathed in softest green French suede for the chapeau above. Chamois suede makes the mustard-colored draped toque next, and dense violet-blue velvet the last model, with its very Eastern-looking swathe and tails of chiffon.

●A KID GLOVE made in four graduated shades of beige and a black suede glove with sequin claws.

●BLACK ANTELOPE also makes this bag, inspired by a binocular case. It is finely outlined in gold kid, with gold kid appliqued initials and a long over-the-shoulder handle.

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The Fashion Parade sketched by Petrov

Here are . . .

Autumn Silhouettes

SIX silhouettes, three for day and three for evening, as sponsored by the great French couturiers for the coming autumn and winter seasons.

● **ABOVE:—Left to Right:** Wrist-length jacket, moulded to the figure with vertical tucks. Occasionally skirt fullness is concentrated at the back. ● **FLARING COAT,** collarless. Enormous fur sleeves. ● **FORM-FITTING SILHOUETTE FOR DAY,** high neckline and wide swathed or inset waistbands, self-color or contrastings. ● **LONG-WAISTED EVENING GOWN**—corselet effect, with full, gathered skirt, fragile-looking shoulder-straps, much used.

● **RIGHT: THE "NAUGHTY 'NINETIES" TOUCH REVIVED**—accented bustline and tight skirt flaring out below knees.

● **EXTREME RIGHT: DRAMATIC CAPE.** These capes in furs and all fabrics are featured for day and night. Some have gorgeous linings.

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GOOD GROOMING...

By ALISON SETTLE

Famous English Fashion Authority

Exclusive to . . . The Australian Women's Weekly

● *ALL FOUR MODELS photographed here have that soignee air of which Alison Settle writes this week.*

● *CAREFUL GROOMING is the basis of the casual charm achieved by the ensemble at top left. Carnation angora, with hat in deeper shade.*

● *HALF THE CHARM of the little hat in the centre is due to the meticulous care exercised in the hair-do.*

● *YOU COULDN'T HOPE to wear a hat like the veiled model above without carefully checking-up on every detail of your dress, and even more rigorous discipline of your hair and make-up is demanded by the elegant little Turkish delight at the left.*

FRENCHWOMEN have an overwhelmingly good reputation as beautiful dressers, not so much because of their individual clothes as because of their care for details, for that which England would call good grooming and the French call soignee. ☆

IT means a close personal neatness and care in every detail, of hair, of cut (yes, of cut above all and of fit as well), in shoes, in stockings, which must fit without a ruckle or crease, in gloves, matching or contrasting with their companions the bag and shoes and the stockings; in the corset-belt which, under even the finest dance dress, must not show the mark of a suspender holder.

It is the care for details which changes the woman of mere dolly good looks into that sculptured beauty, every one of whose curls adds something to her looks.

It is planned good looks, giving the equivalent of the racehorse's sleek, well-polished air. Immaculate is another word for it.

Have you got dresses that do not earn their living? Dresses, that is, that you hardly use, that have hung in your wardrobe, taking up room, earning, as our husbands would no doubt say, no dividend on the capital expended?

Don't whatever you do be a wardrobe hoarder. A wardrobe hoarder is the least chic of women because she is a woman with a weakly, indecisive mind.

To have a reserve cupboard for those things that you just cannot as yet face giving away or selling is the utmost concession you must make to yourself.

You will find most temptation over the matter of hats. For almost all women it is difficult to realise what a short life hats have and that fashion never returns that way again.

Corsets, belts, there is another category of clothes not to be hoarded. There is a definite span of life to a belt. When the elastic ceases fully to hold its line, that is the day on which to bid good-bye to your belt.

Two belts for day and for sports, washed every other night, and two corsets for evening (if you go out for bridge or dancing) should be the full current allowance and none others, just sagging, just too big here or there, should be kept.

Express Yourself

OF shoes there is only one thing to say, that there is not a well-dressed woman who does not keep her shoes on lasts. That is an absolute rule, never in any hurry to be neglected.

The woman who has least to spend is the one who has to put most brain and personality into her dressing to balance the lightness of her purse.

She is the one who knows the meaning of the all-day dress which seems right from breakfast to dinner—and is, because of its changes of accessories, pique collar in the morning, velvet in the afternoon; plain belt up to lunch-time, belt with fashion interest thereafter; no scarf early on, scarf interest towards evening.

But none of it goes if good grooming isn't the basis of the whole thing. If an indifferently clean pique is replaced by a velvet belt that needs brushing and steaming it would have been better to have had no ideas on the matter at all.

Good grooming means elimination not only in the number of clothes you have, but in the bits and pieces you use with them.

The elegantly-dressed woman adds just so much and no more. You know so well yourself how, when you are asked out to lunch at a restaurant and you are doubtful as to the newness and fashion rightness of your clothes, your instinct is to go and buy a flower, add a scarf, put a clip in your hat or do something which you think will distract the eye from the effect as a whole.

And you are wrong, wrong every time. The added flower and scarf and pin have helped just nothing. They have shown up the basic wrongness of a suit, drawn attention to it when you should have played it down.

Even if you hurry out and buy your suit a hat, you're buying it for a suit that's still not going to be of lasting satisfaction to you.

Depend on good grooming, good—that is restrained—make-up, and your own charm. Don't let a couple of silly carnations or a rather blowsy orchid, imitation or real, try to do the work that you yourself, your own personality, should do. Charm your host and carry the party without the aid of bits and pieces.

DOES YOUR COMPLEXION SHOW SIGNS OF SELF-POISONING?

A muddy, over-greasy skin, with a tendency to pimples and blackheads can mean only one thing—the accumulation of poisons in the blood. Nature is warning you that your system is not ridding itself properly of waste matter. Don't let this state of affairs go on. Take Eno's "Fruit Salt." A sparkling glass of Eno first thing every morning gently yet thoroughly dismisses food waste before it has time to produce the poisons which cause bad complexions.

Eno costs 2/3 and double quantity 3/9

Aus.104

Life today calls for ENO'S 'FRUIT SALT'

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An Editorial

MARCH 19, 1938.

ROYALTY AND THE REST OF US

THE Australian Women's Weekly is especially proud of its new feature, the life story of the Duchess of Kent, which is commenced in this issue.

The life stories of the distinguished ladies near the British Throne have an interest and a value for women readers that no other biographies can have.

The reason is not that these Royal lives are so remote from our own, but that they have a strong kinship to our own.

The characteristic that distinguishes the British Royal Family is its simplicity of life, its interest in all the things that interest ordinary families throughout the Empire.

But it is more than just one of those families. It is the pattern and exemplar of them all.

Comradeship in service is clearly the ideal of the present King and Queen, and what an inspiration it is to every man and wife.

One cannot fail to appreciate the parallel between the affection of a King for his own family and his paternal interest in the welfare of his larger family—the people.

In other things, too, the Royal Family typifies the best of the British outlook; the idealism, the moderation, the good taste and good nature that are among the finest qualities of our race.

Just as in times of stress and crisis we may confidently look to the King to set an example of courage, honor and wisdom, so in ordinary affairs we may take the lead of his family.

Manners, etiquette, taste—in all these things the Royal ladies set an example of quiet dignity.

And in fashion, so important to all women, the Duchess of Kent in particular has always given a lead and interpreted the vogue with perfect taste.

Royal by birth, Princess Marina was the wise choice of a British Prince whose own great popularity was enhanced by the appeal of his gracious wife.

Her life story shows the Duchess to be, like the other ladies of the Royal Household, a fitting leader of society—and a charming woman.

—THE EDITOR.

Points of View

Men Must Eat

IN Sweden, says a charming visitor from that far land, men still expect their wives to be good cooks, and girls don't dream of marrying unless they are.

This may seem somewhat old-fashioned to some of us who expect to be married "just for ourselves." But it's really profound wisdom.

Man's stomach may not be the way to his heart . . . but he still has a stomach, and keeping it cosy and contented is one factor in keeping married life smooth and pleasant.

Our visitor further declares that Swedish wives go back to school to catch up on modern culinary methods.

If this gets round among the men, there's likely to be a rush of Australian migrants to Sweden. So cook up, girls!

It's All a Pose

THE South African Empiad girls told the people of Perth the other day that Sydney girls "hold themselves badly."

Just how does one hold oneself well?

Every country and every age, every cult, and every change of fashion supply a different answer.

There were riots at the turn of the century over the aesthetes' attempts to introduce "the Grecian bend," which they considered artistic, and the plain beef-eating Briton thought merely an unhealthy slouch.

On the other hand, no sensible person nowadays would recommend the ramrod figure advocated by the drill-sergeant as either healthy or handsome in either sex.

Surely all we ought to ask of each other is to be reasonably natural, and not too pompous about it.

OUR TENNIS STARS GO ABROAD. A charming shipboard study of Thelma Coyne, Nancye Wynne, Mrs. Hopman, and Dorothy Stevenson, members of the Australian women's tennis team which sailed for England last week. They will be joined at Wimbledon by Miss Joan Hartigan

Lacquered Lady

CYCLAMEN lipstick, carnation-red rouge, nails adorned with gilded designs, hair sprinkled with many-colored sequins . . . these are among the new commands of fashion.

One of these days there's going to be a riot when a woman walks down the street with brown hair, pink skin, unpainted lips, and natural nails.

People will regard it as next door to nudism.

Worse to Come

THE opera singers of Warsaw finally won their desired wages and conditions by a long stay-in strike.

But somehow we fancy the limits of industrial terrorism have not yet been reached.

One of these days the singers are going to stage a sing-on strike.

They'll give them the theatre to shut them up.

LYRIC OF LIFE

3 A.M.

At this late hour
The windows are blind, unknowing things,
Mile after mile of eyelessness,
And in the darkness lying behind them
Is stillness,
Unconsciousness,
Sleep.

Yet here and there
One light gleams out mysteriously . .
Perhaps there is a woman ill,
A baby crying,
Or men, shirt-sleeved, with greasy packs of cards
And heavy eyes
At this late hour.

—PHYLLIS DUNCAN-BROWN.

Singing in the Bath

SYDNEY HOSPITAL nurses complain of a new hardship—they are not allowed to sing in the bath.

Can such barbarity be excused on any ground whatever?

Singing in the bath is one of the most cherished privileges of free men and women. And rightly so.

For one thing, the bathroom is the only auditorium yet devised whose acoustics make the average voice sound almost good—to the singer.

Again, only song can screw up the shrinking heart to face a cold shower in mid-July.

And, finally, it's humane when we sing in the bath—there's nobody there to hear.

All in Together

MR. MICHAEL MAGUIRE dropped in on Melbourne last week after seeing daughter Mary and some others of his family safely started on screen careers in Hollywood.

He has decided to give up the hotel business and go into the movies himself.

He's not planning to act, but to coach film players in the art of fisticuffs, at which he is an expert.

This family attack, so common nowadays, has the advantage of communal effort of wide publicity for the family name, and, of course, of increased income.

And no one need have an inferiority complex about the others.

Revival

MAH-JONGG is sweeping back to popularity with smart hostesses.

We've always observed there's a distinct psychological release in shouting "Pung!"

Then again, it may be a subtle form of pro-Chinese propaganda.

Or is it just that the hostesses can't stand the things darts do to the furniture?

IN AND OUT OF SOCIETY . . . . *By WEP*

Rhymes and Whimsies by Invalid Poet

"Rhymes and Whimsies," a modest little twenty-six page book of poetry, has been published over the equally modest name of "'Rickety Kate."

The verses express a fresh, simple personality that is like a cool, gentle hand laid on the hot brow of a hard-boiled world.

THE poet who hides her identity behind the very homely nom-de-plume is Mrs. Minnie Filson, whose home—surrounded by flowers and greenery—overlooks the harbor at Mosman.

Mrs. Filson lets down the tradition of the wild-haired, wild-eyed poet. A quiet-voiced, unaffected woman, she talks with humor and discernment of poets, beauty, and literature in the same tone of easy familiarity that the average woman uses to talk about her recipes, her children, and the garden borders.

Her individual observation of natural beauty in simple things fits into her day side by side with domestic life.

Born in Wyalong, Minnie Filson spent her schooldays in Mosman, and from her earliest youth developed the love of simple beauty that characterises her poetry.

She liked school, and planned a literary career, but when an opportunity came for a commercial career she chose it instead. For some time she was manager of the "Church Standard." At 25 she married, and her son, Arthur, is twelve years old.

For ten years Mrs. Filson has composed her verses from a rich storehouse of memory. Through an illness she has been in bed for ten years.

"I have seen nothing but the ceiling and faces upside down for years," she said cheerfully, "but in a way it is a blessing. It has enabled me to concentrate and to clarify impressions.

"When I think of phrases or compose verses I lock them up in my head till one of the family has time to write them down for me. Soon I hope to write them myself. I sat up for the first time this week."

HER depth of understanding and pleasing variety of style are expressed in the following examples:—

AFFINITY

I wonder if the cabbage knows
He is less lovely than the rose,
Or if he squats in smug content,
A source of noble nourishment.
And if he pities for her sins
The rose, who has no vitamins,
Or, if one thing his green heart knows . . .
That same Fire that warms the rose.

GRAN

See, little son, how calm she sits,
And as she rests she thinks and knits.
To us a lacy shawl appears,
But for her the stories of the years
Are knitted into the pattern fine—
Her story, little one, yours and mine.

Her Fairies

"IT is sad, but true, that we become so accustomed to beauty that we become unaware of it. I always used to assert proudly that Sydney's harbor was more beautiful than Loch Lomond or Killarney. I thought I knew every mood and every glimpse of it.

"But for ten years I have not had a sight of it, until this week I saw it again for the first time, and realised that because I had become accustomed to it I had never really seen or known it."

Though a practical, homely person, Mrs. Filson's life is peopled with fairies and demons. It was a "strange fairy" who caused the affliction that has kept her in bed for ten years, and the "chief demon" she had to conquer was the disadvantage that she could not read regularly.

"I have several friends who kindly read to me aloud, but appreciation of poetry, like looking at paintings, is such an individual thing that one gathers greater richness from reading it than hearing it.

"My greatest joy is the daily ten minutes when my son holds up a book for me to read myself."

"Rhymes and Whimsies." Our copy from Moore's.

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PUZZLING OUT *Crossword* PUZZLES

L. W. Lower Unearths a Few More Ways of Annoying Yourself

By L. W. LOWER, Australia's Foremost Humorist
Illustrated by WEP

Some misguided fiend has given Mrs. Lower a book of crossword puzzles.

I thought I was pretty well broken in to the ordinary questions like, "Where did you go last night?" and all that, but when a man's asked what's the name of a lake in western China beginning with "K" and it's got an "S" in it, it's time to leave home.

SHE reckons that crossword puzzles are educating.

It's not everybody who could tell you off-hand the correct name for a Patagonian horned sloth, but at the same time it's a bit awkward to work into ordinary conversation.

And another thing: Supposing you were quietly reading a book with your feet up on the sofa and a woman came up to you and said: "What's three-fifths of a camel?"

I mean to say, what the blazes would anyone want with three-fifths of a camel?

Then: "Do you think it might be a mel?"

"I dunno. Why don't you book a room in town when you're doing the things. What's a mel, anyhow?"

"Three-fifths of a camel, of course . . . or it might be a cam . . . do you think it might be a cam?"

"Arr, shut up!"

That's the way rows start. Not the only way, of course. I've frequently found myself in the middle of a terrific argument at home and the subject has become so confused that we've had to start all over again in order to find out what it was all about and who started it in the first place.

What's more, when I came home and threw my hat on the floor I was just tersely told to "Hang that up!"

L. W. LOWER solving a crossword puzzle.

Now, I'm told to suspend my head covering on the curved wall attachment. That's what crosswords are doing to our place.

Take this one as an example. It's all worked out and a very small one.

M U G
A S U
T E M

The clues are

Across:
TO STICK BACKWARDS.
CHINESE BIRD-PERCH.
WHAT FOLLOWS PRO.

Down:
FOUND ON THE FLOOR.
USUALLY PRECEDED BY AB.
O—ALL YE FAITHFUL (hymn).

Now, I ask you, as one woman to another, is that fair?

I've had a lot to put up with in my time. There was the jig-saw puzzle era, for instance. I took pity on my poor wife and threw away a few of the more awkward-looking pieces in order to make it easier for her.

Then the dog chewed a few more pieces which should have made it much more interesting. I suggested getting a penknife and carving the bits so that they would fit in somewhere, but all I got was contumely. Wep has the pieces now. He's going to make a hall-stand out of them or something.

Good Time Coming

BY the way. Pay up your subscription for the paper immediately! This page is going to be pretty startling in a couple of weeks' time. Wep has bought a caravan in which he threatens to lead a careless, nomadic life, with a heigh-ho for the open road and all that.

I am hiring a houseboat which will be chained up in the middle of some river, and so far as I can make out we are going to collaborate by telepathy.

Poor Wep. He has just phoned me to ask what kind of a story he's got to illustrate. I told him it was about puzzles and things and this and that. I then hung up the receiver.

I've got a reason for going on a houseboat. I've got haemoptysis. I've just looked up the dictionary to find out how to spell it, and the dictionary says, among other things, "This is a very serious symptom and to take it lightly, as some patients do, is suicidal."

I was feeling pretty good until I read that. Sorry to intrude these personal matters, but you know how it bucks you up to tell people how close to the grave you are and the frightful pangs you get and pointing to the place where it just looks like a red-hot iron.

Right at this moment I have a puzzle. It is a piece of paper on which is a message to ring up a mysterious telephone number.

The puzzle is: IS it someone I owe money to? Is it someone who wants to borrow some money? Is it the fond mother of a small boy who wants to become a journalist? Or is it the police?

Having in mind past experiences I think I'll just forget about it.

The best thing to do if you feel like puzzling is to go to a Chinese restaurant, point somewhere about the middle of the menu and say, "I'll have some of that."

When you get it, you've got to guess what it is. When you've eaten it, you try to guess what it was.

Highly recommended.

Why not SLIM & Improve your Health

JUST think how smarter you'll look if you're slim — and how much healthier, fresher and fitter you'll feel if you "slim while you sleep" with the aid of Bile Beans.

Slenderness can be yours without starvation diet or violent exercise if you take Bile Beans. Just a couple nightly before getting into bed. The very next day you'll feel better in yourself, and soon you'll notice a difference in your weight.

So start on the sure way to health and slenderness by taking Bile Beans regularly at bedtime.

"After taking Bile Beans nightly for six weeks I am delighted to tell you that I have lost fourteen pounds. Another result is wonderfully improved health, and I feel brighter and more energetic than I have been for years."—Mrs. K. E. Baskelter.

* *

"I never go to bed without taking Bile Beans. They bring that perfect health which makes you feel years younger. They have improved my figure, made me sleep better, given me more energy, and made me cheerful and happy."—Mrs. B. King.

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Asthma Germs Killed in 3 Minutes

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2380

Intimate Life Story of the

Continued from Page 2

I, TOO, was deeply moved by those simple words, though the voice was familiar to me. As an intimate friend of Princess Ileana (now Archduchess of Hapsburg), youngest daughter of Queen Marie of Rumania, I came in touch with the group of her young cousins, among whom were the three beautiful Greek Princesses, daughters of Prince Nicholas of Greece and the Grand Duchess Helen of Russia.

My first personal recollections of Princess Marina date from the days before the Great War when she used to come and stay in Russia with her maternal grandparents, the Grand Duke and Grand Duchess Vladimir, at St. Petersburg.

I remember the occasion when the three little Greek princesses had measles or chicken-pox, I am not quite sure which, and we were all quite positive we would have it, too, after having been with them, and we looked every day in the glass to see whether we already had any spots.

I remember a Christmas-tree party at the palace of the Grand Duchess Vladimir, and Princess Marina, who in those days must have been about three or four years old, took a great interest in shoes.

She particularly loved her little Russian boots of soft leather, and liked to bring them close to her tiny nose and sniff with great satisfaction at the good Russian leather. In those days she was rather small, but plump with the same large light-brown eyes which looked at one in a solemn way, and a tiny red mouth which was always ready to twist into one of those fascinating smiles of hers.

I ALSO remember an occasion when, as a small girl myself, I was heading a deputation of other small girls who were to present a purse to the Grand Duchess Vladimir, or Maria Pavlovna as she was called in Russia, for the children of the Greek soldiers killed in the Balkan War.

The occasion was one of the charity bazaars held every year at Christmastime by the Grand Duchess Vladimir in the sumptuous premises of the Nobility Club at St. Petersburg. All the well-known charitable organisations had their stalls at this function and amply replenished the year's budget.

I was carrying a bouquet of pink roses and waiting for the Grand Duchess to occupy her seat on a raised dais at the central stall in the middle of the large hall.

I remember the bright lights, the gorgeous uniforms of the officers and the beautiful dresses of the ladies.

The Tzigane band had just struck up the latest popular tune after the last strains of the National Anthem had died down.

Almost trembling with impatience and excitement I advanced and mounted the three or four steps leading up to the Grand Duchess' seat. I heard my name pronounced formally by the lady-in-waiting.

The Grand Duchess smiled and stretched out a bejewelled hand which I was supposed to kiss whilst dropping the Russian Court curtsy. By the way, the Russian Court curtsy differs from the English one in that the right foot is first brought forward and then swept backwards in a semi-circle, thus obliging the person to draw a step backwards when actually bending down.

Sat on Tramlines

I WAS on the top step and I had forgotten my peril. I swept down in my best approved style, missed the step and would have clattered down if the Grand Duchess had not caught my hand in time.

She never moved a muscle and continued to smile until I had steadied myself. My small companions stifled giggles. "There's many a slip 'twixt hand and lip," remarked the Grand Duchess Cyril, who was standing near by with her daughters, Princess Mashka and Princess Kira, who were also small girls.

The remark was made in English and in an undertone, and not meant for me to hear, but it reached my sensitive ears. My cheeks felt brighter than the roses I was carrying.

I looked round wildly to see who had noticed by faux pas and my eyes landed on a solemn little face which just looked up at her grandmother and then back at me, but did not laugh.

Somehow I felt comforted and I discovered later that when Princess Marina did not laugh it was not because she lacked a sense of humor, but because at the age of three she, like her grandmother, was a grande dame and behaved like one.

Even on the occasion when she persisted in sitting down on the tramlines in Athens. Removed by force by her English governess and promised a spanking if she tried to repeat the experiment, Princess Marina promptly defied the authorities and sat down firmer than ever.

Was Spanked

"WHAT paper did you get as a child?" someone asked her once.

"The Times,'" replied the Princess with that fascinating half-whimsical smile so characteristic of her sense of humor.

"Surely you did not read 'The Times' when you were a small child," exclaimed her friend.

"No, but I was spanked with it," came the prompt reply, "so I am familiar with it since my early days!"

The true origin of this witty remark was told me by Prince Nicholas. It seems that one day as he was reading "The Times" little Princess Olga, Princess Marina's eldest sister, was being extremely unmanageable.

Her governess as a last resource applied to Prince Nicholas for support, who in his turn applied to "The Times," and with its aid punished the little culprit, thus establishing a family legend of "getting 'The Times'" or in other words being spanked.

This form of punishment was insisted upon by Prince Nicholas, her father, who like all the members of the Greek Royal Family has a very strong feeling of duty and discipline.

But I am afraid that though prescribing the method, he could rarely, it was said, bring himself to apply it as his small daughter had always a ready and appropriate reply on her coral lips which invariably struck a responding chord in his own heart; and hiding a smile Prince Nicholas would retire, leaving the application of the painful duty to her governess and "The Times."

In those days already Princess Marina was a very self-possessed little person and had a will of her own. She was generally very sweet-tempered and got her own way in a smiling, determined manner.

PRINCESS MARINA in the dress of an Evzone, those picturesque Greek soldiers who served as the King's bodyguard. As a girl Her Royal Highness always loved acting and dressing up.

The following story is told in the family about Princess Marina's victory over her mother. Both Prince and Princess Nicholas insisted that their daughters at an early age should learn good manners. However small, when in the presence of strangers they were expected to be pleasant.

Princess Marina, however, held her own views on the subject, and one day at St. Petersburg, when she and her mother were staying with her grandparents, she refused to behave like a little lady.

The Grand Duchess quietly took her small daughter out of the room, and leading her into an empty salon told her that she would have to stay there alone until she stopped crying and was prepared to behave as a little Princess should. On these instructions she left her and closed the door.

A few minutes later the Grand Duchess returned to see whether the desired effect had been produced and whether her little daughter was ready to come out again and be amiable to her mother's guests. The crying had certainly ceased. Little gurgling sounds came from the room where the rebellious prisoner was supposed to make her penitence. Princess Marina sounded very amiable.

The delighted Grand Duchess opened the door and beheld—her strict and formidable father sitting on a chair with the small rebel on his knee!

They both looked slightly guilty but very happy and, above all, they both looked rebels! Against such an alliance there was nothing to be done. The Grand Duchess quietly closed the door again. It is sad her grandfather and protector did not live to see little Princess Marina grow up into lovely womanhood.

The Great War broke out. In fact, during that time Princess Marina was staying in Russia. Then came the Russian and the Greek Revolutions, and I met Princess Marina already in exile.

We met in Paris and on the Riviera and finally in England, which is now the home of the Duchess of Kent. I do not hesitate for a moment to state that now the Duchess of Kent is a hundred per cent. British.

Her husband and her children are her world, and all that belongs to them is hers. Their country, their interests, their tastes, they are all hers. Greece is a sweet memory, but Princess Marina is now the British Duchess of Kent, and England is her country and her home.

To Be Continued

"... and where are you going, Dear Lady?"

"... down for an Arch-Curve Fitting, Sir!"

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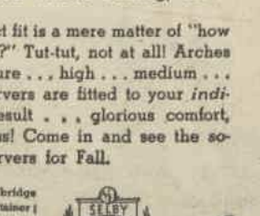

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Duchess of Kent—in Story & Pictures

PRINCESS MARINA, Duchess of Kent, in her first carriage.

IN RUSSIA, with her sister, Elizabeth (left) as a child.

Child who became our lovely Duchess

THE BEAUTIFUL DUCHESS, as a world leader of fashion. Marina styles are eagerly copied everywhere.

AS A Shakespearean actress in "The Merchant of Venice."

SIXTEEN years ago. Another study of Marina, taken in 1922.

THE DANCING DUCHESS. An informal glimpse taken soon after her marriage to the Duke of Kent.

THE DUCHESS TO-DAY. A happy family group of the Duke and Duchess of Kent and their two children, Prince Edward and Princess Alexandra. The intimate life story of the Duchess begins in this issue of The Australian Women's Weekly.

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Why they use it

Tens of thousands of women everywhere were heartily tired of the old "plastering" style of face powder, so that when the famous Charmosan face powder appeared, they turned to it with a prayer of thankfulness, for here at last they had what they always wanted.

Charmosan face powder takes years and years from your looks, for it subdues and conceals faults and signs of age in your skin so that they seem no longer there, and it does this without any "plastering" effect, for Charmosan face powder is slickly modern and clever.

It recaptures and puts back into your skin those things you thought you had lost . . . youth and charm.

It stays on for hours and hours with sweet enchantment, no matter what you are doing—dancing, golfing, motoring or what not.

Charmosan face powder from Paris

All shades and suntan. Big box 2/6. Sold everywhere, including N.Z.

Give your face its "good night" massage with Charmosan Cold Cream. Removes "make-up," dust, etc., from skin and pores in way soap and water can never do. This cream goes right into pores and out again, cleanses beautifully, and leaves skin supple and smooth. This regular nightly massage assists greatly in keeping the skin free from wrinkles, crows' feet, pimples, blackheads, and open pores. It also tones up skin and muscles, and prevents sagging flesh. Bondoir Jars, 2/6. Tubes 1/. Sold everywhere by chemists, drapers and stores, including New Zealand.***

THREE STRANGERS

HE passed through the lounge, holding his stick and hat out to the vestaire, who had to follow him into the room to gain possession of them. He nodded to Louis and strode down between the tables to the one he generally occupied. Arrived there, he took off his glasses and looked around to see if any of his business acquaintances were in the vicinity. Apparently there was no one he knew, so he sat down, snatched up the menu, hit a glass with the edge of his knife to secure the attendance of a waiter, gave an order in apparently one breath, readjusted his spectacles, and propped up a paper in front of him. He ate the first course of his luncheon at top speed, pushed back his chair, and called for another dish. He disposed of that in about the same length of time, drew a cigar from his case and called for coffee. During the whole performance he had scarcely taken his eyes off the script he had propped up in front of the menu before him.

There was something like consternation upon the faces of his three neighbors when he tapped upon the table and evidently snapped out a demand for his bill. Perhaps I should have made no movement but I caught a glimpse of the girl's face. A few seconds later I was on my way down the room.

"Good morning, Mr. Marketin," I said, pausing at his table.

He looked up with a frown.

"Morning," he replied, regarding me doubtfully.

"My name is Lyson. I have met you at some of these film shows—and at Lady Trehsam's last week," I continued, plunging deep into the mire of snobbery.

"Lady Tresham's? Ah—h'm. Yes, I suppose I was there. One forgets," he went on rapidly.

"I know you are the busiest man in London," I said. "Could you find time just to say how-do-you-do to three friends of mine from the country who have come up purpose!" to see you?"

He frowned.

"I never talk business in a restaurant," he said. "Where are they?"

"Here," I answered. "Mr. Spenser," I said, turning towards him, "this is the gentleman you were asking me about—Mr. Marketin. He would like to make your acquaintance, but he is the busiest man in town. Just shake hands and tell him what you want."

THEY all three sprang to their feet and ranged themselves at the table. It is my conviction that he was flattered by their promptness.

"What can I do for you?" he asked.

Mr. Spenser laid his hand upon his son's shoulder.

"My boy wants to go in for the films," he said.

"So do a hundred and fifty thousand others," was Marketin's comment.

"I am only asking for a screen test," the young man put in eagerly "Just one."

Continued from Page 7

"Friend of Captain Lyson's, eh?"

I caught the pleading in the girl's eyes and I answered quickly.

"Yes."

"You shall have it. Write your name and address on the back of this card," he went on presenting one. "Come to my office at four-thirty this afternoon and I will send you to one of the studios. Excuse me now, please," he added, pocketing his change and dropping a shilling on the table.

"We are so grateful," the girl said softly.

Marketin was without a doubt the biggest bluffer in the profession, but he was not an utter fool. The sound of that soft, velvety voice, the light flowing out from her eyes kept him for a moment rooted to the spot.

"What about the young lady?" he demanded.

"My daughter," Mr. Spenser smiled, "has no ambitions towards film work."

"Why not? She may have gifts. You never can tell. Come with your brother, young lady. You shall both have screen tests."

She hesitated. She glanced at her father and then at her brother, whose face had clouded over.

"But I don't——"

He brushed her protest away.

"Both of you or neither," he snapped out. "Good morning. Good morning, Lyson."

He was gone before anyone could speak. One almost looked to see the dust rise from the well-shaken carpet under his flying heels . . .

On my way out I paused to speak to Louis.

"I did a silly thing," I confessed.

"Et puis alors?" he murmured.

"I introduced them to the fellow. The young man is going to have a screen test."

"Eh, bien?"

"Marketin made it a condition that the girl went, too."

LOUIS frowned. He glanced at the three empty places.

"Do you know where they are staying in London?" he asked.

"Not an idea," I told him.

He sighed.

"What you did I was responsible for," he said. "We must hope for the best."

I was seated at my usual luncheon table at the Milan a week or ten days later studying the menu when I was conscious of a whirlwind of approaching footsteps. A waiter was pushed impatiently away.

"Can I have a word with you—at once—Captain Lyson?" the newcomer demanded in a harsh, unpleasant voice.

I looked up in surprise and recognised Marketin. He was still wearing his hat and overcoat, from the pocket of which was protruding a strip of highly-glazed photographs, and his appearance was rendered less attractive than usual by reason of the perspiration which had broken out upon his forehead and the vicious turn of his lip.

"Won't you sit down?" I invited. "Or are you in a desperate hurry?"

He did not answer me for a moment. Those spectacles were very enclosing, but I had an idea that the man felt ill.

"Are you lunching here?" I inquired.

"I don't know. I suppose so."

"Then why don't you go and remove your coat and hat," I suggested, "and come back and lunch here? We could talk at the same time."

He looked at his overcoat. He felt his hat. It seemed as though he were just realising the condition in which he had presented himself. He left the room and when he came back he had the air of a man who had made a great effort. He had bathed his face and eyes and he spoke without his habitual cascade of words.

"I'm sorry to have interrupted you," he said. "I sit down with you here—yes?"

"Certainly," I answered. "Have a cocktail?"

"I had two outside," he confided. "I felt the need of them. I will have another—yes—but no more to drink with lunch. Something cold with a salad," he ordered, waving away the menu. "I can eat, perhaps, when I see the food, but I cannot order it. Captain Lyson," he went on, leaning across the table, "where did you find those three fiends?"

"What on earth are you talking about?" I asked him.

"Strange words, I know," the man muttered, "but they are strange people. I am a Hungarian, Captain Lyson. I am used to peculiar types—to women who thrill and stab and hurt, to men who laugh and are gay and play to the fool, and to their elders who say nothing but whom no one can break. I have never met anyone like those three."

I was staggered at the man's appearance and speech. I thought of that simple little trio—the quiet, half sulky girl with her fragile air and voice like the ripple of a Devonshire stream, the boy with his cheap good looks, and the old schoolmaster with his soft, gentle manners. I came to the conclusion that Marketin was a little mad.

"I'll tell you the truth," I confessed. "I know nothing about them. I liked their appearance. They seemed to me simple people who had come to London on an absurd errand and I tried to make it easier for them."

"I can't get rid of them," he complained.

"What do you mean you can't get rid of them?" I demanded.

His lunch was brought—cold chicken and ham, I think it was. He fell upon it with his usual furious haste while I was watching the filleting of my sole. Suddenly he broke off. His knife and fork remained suspended. He could have used his napkin to advantage. He just talked.

"You are a man of some consequence, Captain Lyson," he said. "For that reason I glanced at the young man. Pah! The studios of London are overcrowded with that type. I should have shaken my head and walked away. But the man—the elderly man—his fingers were on my coat sleeve and I turned round. The girl was looking at me. The first impression I had of her was that she was plain and ill-dressed, and then I saw something else. Where it came from I don't know. We Hungarians are supposed to have a sort of second sight. I tell you, Captain Lyson, I saw something in that girl's face which might have set multitudes swaying and rocking, which might have lifted the roofs of the theatres into the air! I saw it, caught it for a moment in those ruminating eyes as she looked at me. Of course, the effect did not last. I was smiling even as I stood there, but I could not go away without making sure that she came to my office. That was why I agreed to make a screen test of the young man."

Please turn to Page 18

All characters in the serials and short stories which appear in The Australian Woman's Weekly are fictitious, and have no reference to any living person.

GIRLIGAGS

"SHE CALLS him her beau—after she has him tied."

Thrilling News!

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"The Loveliest Hosiery in all the World"

WAKE UP YOUR LIVER BILE—

Without Calomel — And You'll Jump out of Bed in the Morning Full of Vim.

The liver should pour out two pounds of liquid bile into your bowels daily. If this bile is not flowing freely, your food doesn't digest. It just decays in the bowels. Gas bloats up your stomach. You get constipated. Your whole system is poisoned and you feel sour, tired and weary and the world looks blue.

Laxatives are only makeshifts. A mere bowel movement doesn't get at the cause. It takes those good old Carter's Little Liver Pills to get those two pounds of bile flowing freely and make you feel "up and up." Harmless, gentle, yet amazing in making bile flow freely. Ask for CARTER'S Little Liver Pills by name. Stubbornly refuse anything else. 1/6

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Some NEW LAUGHS

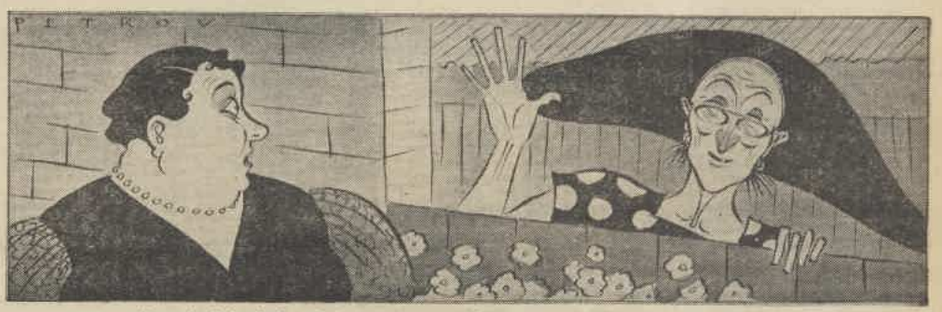
"Most jokes were old and mellow when we were seventeen; When we are old and mellow they'll still be evergreen."

"Isn't it a terrible thing for Mrs. Smith to be left a widow so young?"
"Yes. But what could you expect? She knew her husband was a pedestrian when she married him."

WIFE: What is five and a half yards at 3/11½?
HUSBAND: The week's rent.

MOPSY—The Cheery Redhead

"I certainly enjoyed that dance!"
"Well, I'm glad I lost those sandals in a good cause."



"... And don't forget to come over and see us some night, Mrs. Jones."
"I'm sorry, but my husband is partly paralysed."
"Oh, don't let that worry you. Mine's the same more than half the time."

You can HEAL your Skin Disease with Cuticura

You long to be totally free from the tormenting itch and disfiguring eruptions of skin disease. You long to see those pimples, boils, ulcers and scaling patches heal and disappear. Then buy Cuticura Ointment and your recovery will start with the very first touch of this unfailing healer. For over half-a-century Cuticura has ranked among the world's greatest skin remedies. There are thousands who can show an unblemished skin after 20, 30 and even 40 years martyrdom from eczema. Cuticura has completely healed and eradicated the trouble.

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A MAGICAL HEALER for ECZEMA ULCERS BAD LEGS PIMPLES, BOILS, ABSCESSES CUTS, BURNS and SEPTIC FESTERING ERUPTIONS

THERE'S HEALING IN EVERY TOUCH

★ Until healing is complete, sufferers are advised to use only Cuticura Soap which is made especially mild and soothing for sensitive skins.

Brainwaves

A Prize of 2/6 is paid for each joke used.

SEIZING a passing stranger, the reveller pointed to a bright orb reflected in the still shining water of the lake.

"What's that?" he whispered excitedly.

"That's the moon," was the reply.

"Goo' grashus, how did I get up here?"

"WHAT is an executive?"

"He's a fellow who goes out and finds work—and then finds someone who is willing to pay for having it done. Then he hires somebody else to do it."

MISTRESS: Who was that gentleman who came in just now?

Mary: That wasn't no gentleman, Mum. It was only the master come back for his umbrella.

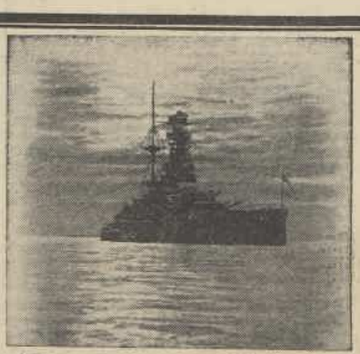
A PARTY of Australian footballers made a conducted tour of the House of Lords. At the end one of the players, pleased with his afternoon, pressed a coin into the hand of their "guide" with the whisper: "Have a glass of beer with us, old man."

The "guide" coughed. "No, really," he protested, smiling. "I'm an M.P."

"That's all right," was the reply. "Have a packet of cigarettes."

"DO you mean to say that Smith is famous for his after-dinner speaking?"

"Too right! He always manages to be speaking on the telephone when the waiter brings the bill."



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SHE DANCED DIVINELY—BUT . . . .

Even that could hardly compensate for her neglect. The room had been warm . . . and offensive perspiration had ruined her frock and her evening. Yet ODORONO could have saved her both.

Make sure you are free from the taint of perspiration! Don't expect friends to tell you . . . don't count on detecting it yourself. Use Odorono regularly to check perspiration . . . prevent odour . . . save your dresses.

Prices: 1/-, 2/- and 3/6

ODO-RO-NO

THREE STRANGERS

HE fell upon his food again, finished everything upon his plate and sat wrapped in gloomy silence.

"I have seen nothing of them since that day," I reminded him. "Tell me what has happened."

He caught at a waiter who was passing.

"Bring me a half flask of Hungarian claret—Carlowitz," he directed. "Some cheese," he ordered from another waiter. "I will tell you," he went on, turning back to me and pushing his empty plate unceremoniously away. "They came—all three of them. The girl scarcely spoke, yet every time I raised my eyes she was looking. They call me a hard man in my office, Captain Lyson. Mine is a hard job. I have to behave like a wild animal sometimes. I gave them a card to a man who owns a studio and I sent them away in my car. The tests were to be sent to me as soon as they were finished. Do you know that since then I have been sick with longing to hear their footsteps, the knock at the door, their names announced?"

They brought him the wine and he drank half a glass eagerly but with more restraint. The frozen look had gone from his face.

"I do myself good with talking," he said. "It is good that I found you here. Now listen. The screen tests came back. The young man—horrible! The girl's—look."

He drew a little roll from his pocket, just ordinary sheets of photographer's proofs already worn a little through constant handling. I looked them through but even as I commenced I uttered a little exclamation.

"This isn't the girl," I cried.

"It is the girl," he assured me with a groan. "Just look at what seems to be shining out of those eyes," he continued, tapping on the second of the photographs with a forefinger which was none too clean. "Look at that pose—look at those curving lips. Look at the next one—look at the tenderness of them! She is like one of the strange flowers from that strange country she raves about—where she lives. And here—here—further on. That is the woman who could send men mad with a snap of the fingers or beckon them to her without a movement.

Continued from Page 16

Elisabeth Bergner—all these others that we crawl about on our knees to—they do not belong—they have not got it! She has."

The man's words sounded as though he were ranting but he was earnest—that was the strange part of it. His face was lit up like the face of a prophet and the longer I looked at those cheap, glazed pictures the more impressed I felt with the truth of those broken words of his. Nevertheless, it was incredible.

"Look here, Marketin," I reminded him. "I saw the girl. I saw nothing like that."

"You did," he almost cried out. "Wait," he went on, shaking his fist almost in my face. "Think—think hard. You saw her there. Now, you tell me—there was something strange about her? There was something behind those calm, set little features, some fire behind those placid eyes which came and went, some power from heaven or hell which twisted that mouth to tell a different story with every second. Here, if you are so blind

JUNE CLAYWORTH, M.-G.-M. player, combines three shades of brown woollen material to make this smart frock. It fastens in front with tiny suede buttons. The suede belt matches the buttons

that you cannot see," he concluded, "give me back those photographs."

I shook my head. To tell you the truth, I hated the idea of parting with them.

"Marketin," I said, "I realise a little what you mean, but remember this sort of business is all out of my life. All the same, these photographs—frankly, they are wonderful. I find it hard to believe that they are photographs of that girl and then all of a sudden I look and there—there is no doubt about it. Get on with your story. Tell me about them. What did you do when you realised?"

Marketin's face was suddenly almost reverent.

"I felt," he confessed, "as though I had been living in darkness and there was suddenly light. I saw fame and glory opening up before my eyes. It was I who would present her—the greatest genius of the century! I felt it was almost too much for me. However, I steadied down. Sent a formal note. Addressed it to the father. I said—would he come and bring the girl. I said nothing about the young man. They all three appeared. The moment they walked into my little office I felt the place had become what it is—a shabby little den, smoky, ill-ventilated, with hideous daubs upon the wall and common furniture. They sat down and I felt that I was transported into a palace. Look here, Lyson," he said. "I know I am talking like a madman. I am not mad. You are the first man I have been able to talk to about them. You must realise how I felt to understand."

"Of course," I soothed him. "Go on."

"I was not quite so unnerved then as I am now," he continued. "I told them the screen tests had arrived. I could not show them the pictures for the moment. The young man's, I said, were good in their way, but the film studios in London were full of his type of actor waiting for employment. I could offer him nothing definite. As regards the young lady, I told them, if she was content to stay here and work she could commence her salary from the end of the week. I offered her ten—twenty pounds a week, any sum sufficient to keep her while she was taught something of the technique—a week or two would be ample time—otherwise I would give her an agreement for the first film she acted in and for three years afterwards. Salary would commence at twenty-five pounds a week, I told them, when she was acting. When I had finished they were all three sitting there mute. It was the young man who exploded first. I will not tell you what he said. He got up and was going to walk out of the office, but his sister clutched his arm. Their father, too, he did his best to soothe the young man. There was a good deal of wild and useless talking. The girl was almost dumb. She sat there, her hands folded in her lap, listening to her father and the boy and me. Then she got up and patted her brother's shoulder affectionately.

"'THIS is all very absurd,' she said. 'There has been some stupid mistake, Clarence. I have not the slightest desire to act on the films. I should be perfectly hopeless.'"

"What did you say?" I ventured to ask Marketin.

"You will not believe me, Captain Lyson," he groaned. "All my life I have tried to get the best talent and the best stories cheap. I have tried to get them at a quarter or a half of what they were worth. That has been my life. I made that girl listen to me—I don't know how. I only said a few words. I told her that she had a gift which as yet she did not understand. She had a body of which she had no knowledge. She had a personality which one of the unknown powers of the world had given her and with which she could succeed in becoming, if she wished, the greatest artist of our days. She only laughed at me. Her father looked at me as though I were crazy. I wrote out an agreement and even wrote a cheque with trembling fingers for two hundred and fifty pounds! She had only to sign. The money was hers. She refused. The old man looked at me as though—as though—oh, well, that doesn't matter.

"'We are rather wasting time,' she said at last. 'Do you really mean that you can do nothing for Clarence?'

"'Nothing at all,' I told her savagely . . .

"I sat in my chair and I watched them go. The walls of the room seemed to close in upon me. The palace had gone. I was sitting in my own filthy little office. The light had gone out."

"And since then?" I asked.

"I have not seen them. I have been a half-a-dozen times to the shabby hotel where they stay and they will not see me."

He rolled up the photographs and secured them with a rubber band.

"The hotel," he told me, "is called the Western Counties Hotel. It is in the street leading down to Paddington Station. Will you go there and see what you can do, Captain Lyson?"

"I'll go there this afternoon," I promised him.

A gleam of light was in his face as he rose to his feet.

"I shall be in my office until seven o'clock," he said as he left me.

The Western Counties Hotel was a shabby, grimy-looking building, a languid conversion from a tall, cheaply-built dwelling-house. There was a familiar smell of stale cooking as I entered, oilcloth on the floor, a decrepit reception desk from behind which a middle-aged woman in black, with brass-colored hair and many jingling ornaments, came forward to greet me with an ingratiating smile. Her face fell as I made my inquiry.

"Mr. Spenser and his son and daughter left half an hour ago," she announced, glancing at the clock.

"Did they leave any address?" I asked.

Please turn to Page 20

The Brightest Sunday Nights you'll ever spend, you'll spend with

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Perfectly Balanced Entertainment Featuring Melody, Comedy, Variety, Drama, Romance.

7.15 The Mutiny of the Bounty. A Saga of the South Seas.

7.30 Famous Escapes—A B.S.A. Production.

7.45 Gems of Musical Comedy — favourites of yesterday.

8.0 Dream Melodies — A B. S. A. Production Musical Romance.

8.15 The BIG Show of 1938—featuring Bert Howell's Band, Frank Cave, "Dilly" Foster and Star Artists.

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Make sure you have Hansen's Junket Tablets always on hand

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Each week £1 is paid for the best letter, and 2/6 for every other letter published here.

Pen names are not used, following the decision of readers given in the poll taken on this page.

So they Say

LETTERS WELCOME!

Grouch, praise, novel viewpoint, topical comment, any interesting thought is welcome to this page. But, KEEP LETTERS SHORT. Our address is at top of page 3 of this issue.

WOMEN JUDGES

I RECENTLY heard it remarked that if women could secure appointments as Supreme Court judges they would be much harder on their own sex than men would be.

This may be true of uneducated or inexperienced women. But to secure such an appointment women would naturally be well educated, advanced in years, and tempered by contact with the world.

And they would be less influenced by sentiment, always a vulnerable spot in any man's armor.

What do other readers think?

£1 for this letter to Mrs. R. A. Mitchell, Coventry Street, Balmoral, Brisbane.

♦ ♦ ♦

CRUEL TREATMENT

RECENTLY I went to a large city hospital. I was sent first to the casualty room, where I waited four hours before I saw a doctor. Next I was sent to the superintendent, and had another two hours' wait.

Then I was sent to a branch of the hospital to see a specialist, and waited another two hours to see him!

Cannot something be done about this pitiful state of affairs? It is not only unnecessary, but cruel to a person ill or in pain.

Mrs. D. Edwards, c/o Salvation Army Hostel, Elizabeth St., Sydney.

♦ ♦ ♦

INIQUITOUS TIPPING

WHY is it that one must tip at an hotel, or on a sea trip?

On board ship one must tip the waiter, bedroom and bath steward, and others. On a recent cruise, envelopes were left by the company on our tables requesting tips for those with whom we didn't come in contact, such as the cooks. Why can't the companies pay their servants enough to ensure efficient service, without the public having to pay more, for the person who does not "tip" is sadly neglected.

Miss Clemson, Ungarie, N.S.W.

♦ ♦ ♦

BOOK CENSORSHIP

FROM time to time we read outbursts of anger and ridicule at the National Book Censorship.

But I feel that the sooner we get a stricter surveillance of the books that pass the censor the better.

Working in a library, and having to read as many books as possible for the benefit of subscribers, I have come across dozens which should never have been on the shelves, but just lately one example of indecency came in which makes our whole censorship an absolute farce.

Had it been the outpourings of a political agitator we would have been protected. But when it means the mental and moral contamination of thousands of young people, it is passed by the censor as fit for public consumption.

Can't we do anything?

Mrs. H. J. Eastlake, 111 Harold St., Thornbury, N17, Melbourne.

♦ ♦ ♦

ELUSIVE HAPPINESS

IT'S time we stopped talking happiness to young married couples as though it were something to be found waiting for them on the threshold of their new home.

There appears to be a widespread belief that marriage is synonymous with happiness.

Can we wonder when we read popular romantic novels and nursery tales of people who "live happily ever after"?

If young couples went into marriage prepared to make their marriage a success they would have a fairer chance of finding happiness.

It rests entirely with yourself. You can't get happiness out of marriage unless you are prepared to invest something in it.

Mrs. K. Fraser, Kyabram P.O., Vic.

Feminine Frills of Yesteryear—and Dress To-day!

THERE is no doubt about the beauty and grace of the frocks of long ago, but, Mrs. Griffiths (26/2/'38), could you honestly imagine Miss 1938 hurrying along to the office each morning in a hooped skirt or bustle?

Common sense first of all rules the fashions of to-day, but there is limitless scope for individual tastes—frills, flares, furs, bows. Our modern versions of the leg-o'-mutton sleeves, high waistlines, and full skirts leave little to be desired.

Miss N. Mierendorff, 91 St. George's Crescent, Drummoyne, N.S.W.

Many Disadvantages

MRS. GRIFFITHS must have a dress sense that is very hard to please. Modern frocks can be just as feminine as those of 150 years ago, without frills and fussy trimmings.

There are many disadvantages about the old style: the laundering, and the expense of material one would have to buy. I have heard it said that the women of yesteryear often had to stand for hours rather than sit and crush their frocks. And how hot such frocks would be in the summer!

Miss Cisly Campbell, Boston St., Moree, N.S.W.

Impractical To-day

MRS. F. FLORENCE GRIFFITHS wonders why women do not copy the old-fashioned dresses of 150 years ago.

She must realise that those fashions would be very impractical in this crowded age. Imagine getting on the tram at the peak hour dressed up in crinolines and such exaggerated modes.

Present-day fashions are much more sensible and economical.

Mrs. Josephine Hughes, 2 King St., Sandy Bay, Hobart.

Man's Equal Now

IN the days of "frills and furbelows" it was woman's privilege to look sweet, be helpless, and swoon at trifles. Nowadays woman is endeavoring to take her place in life as man's partner and equal, therefore she needs suitable equipment to carry out the task.

The "plain, straight-up-and-down frocks" are part of her armor for the battle.

Mrs. W. W. Honnor, 60 Tilloch St., Dobroyd Pt., N.S.W.

Styles Adapted

IN this age of rush and bustle women would never tolerate clothes which were cumbersome and superfluous.

To-day, as never before in history, a woman can express her individuality by her clothes, for fashion allows her to wear practically any style, provided she can "carry it off."

Many new styles can be traced to period fashions skilfully adapted to modern requirements.

Which fashion is to be preferred, the one which makes for comfort and freedom of limb, or the other which demands that its victim be encased in a strait-jacket?

M. G. Atkinson, Post Office, Caulfield East, Vic.

Suitable for Pageantry

MRS. GRIFFITHS' suggestion that the fashions of another time should be revived is surely impracti-

A little awkward on occasions.

cable. One can see the spirit of any age reflected in its sartorial fashions, and the artificiality and picturesque extravagance of a past century, though charming enough when displayed in an historical pageant, have no place in the everyday life of this modern age.

Miss M. Berry, Room 904, Savings Bank Building, 14 Castlereagh Street, Sydney.

Best Way To Kill the Bogy of War

I AGREE with Mrs. Valentine (26/2/'38) that it is unnecessary to teach the youth of the nation the horrors of war.

How much better would it be if we dwelt on the need for peace and goodwill between the nations.

If we cultivated such a spirit we would see our fellow-men as the kindly, well-meaning folk they really are—the whole world as one brotherhood of nations.

If each of us "did our bit" in this respect there would be no more wars or industrial strifes.

Miss Agnes Robinson, 12 Ingleby Road, Camberwell, Vic.

Romance of War

EVERY boy is born with the primitive urge to battle in his blood. That is why most of them enjoy playing with toy soldiers and with toy pistols.

It is all in the masculine make-up, and it is only by education and culture that such instincts are pushed into the background.

When they grow into adolescence, they think it romantic to don uniforms, buckle on their pistols, and fare forth to battle as did knights of old.

Therefore, I say, it is necessary to instil in children hatred of war. The more they realise its horrors the less romantic they will think it.

K. Savage, Swan St., Hobart.

Education Necessary

UNLIKE Mrs. Valentine, I regard propaganda against war essential. The youth of the nation is apt to be

Proper Way to Rear Children?

A LARGE percentage of our modern parents are unable to rear their children in an efficient and unbiased manner. Tastes of to-day verge towards bridge and cocktail parties.

Many children are forced to spend their childhood in cramped, self-contained flats.

Would it not be better to let the children be reared by really competent people? As a suggestion, I would advise an institution, run on the same lines as a boarding school, but under the supervision of trained psychologists, dietitians and doctors.

Mrs. F. Kidson, c/o, Mrs. C. Graham, Lake Illawarra South, South Coast, N.S.W.

carried away by the so-called glories of war. Thousands of young men who went to the European war were ignorant of the horrors that faced them.

It is difficult to see how peace can be preserved through any other means than education.

A. Daly, Divett Place, Adelaide.

Must Understand

MAINTENANCE of peace depends on considering matters from the other fellow's point of view, and understanding him. We must learn to understand a completely different people to appreciate their viewpoint.

We may have to be tolerant and generous. But only in this way will goodwill be fostered and the war bogy laid low.

Miss M. Proud, c/o G.P.O., Ipswich, Qld.

Thoughtless Youth

MRS. VALENTINE says that no war —except for patriotic fervor at the eleventh hour—has been welcomed.

I do not agree. Even to-day there are thoughtless young men and women who openly say they would like a war so that they could fight, or nurse the wounded soldiers, in order to relieve the monotony of their lives.

Definitely, to publicise the horrors of war will create a genuine reluctance in the whole nation to participate in it.

Miss Cochrane, North Rd., Pt. Lincoln, S.A.

Are Parents Loath To Provide Good Education?

MISS B. RATTINGLY makes a false statement when she says that "parents do not strive to give their children a higher education than they themselves have had."

The majority of people give their children the best education they can

Higher education necessary.

possibly afford. They want them to be well-equipped to follow their chosen careers. You certainly do not find many selfish parents.

Jean Lowe, 13 Panorama Road, Campsie, N.S.W.

Keen Competition

PARENTS definitely should do all in their power to give their children the best education they can afford, and so assist them to succeed.

In earlier days, education did not count so much, and girls had only one career to look forward to—marriage. Nowadays, with so much competition in the field of commerce, education makes a great deal of difference.

Miss M. Berkley, Flat No. 6, Stafford House, Stafford Street, Double Bay, N.S.W.

Must Have Ability

I DO not agree with Miss Rattingly when she says that higher education is very necessary for children to-day—more so than ever before.

A certain standard of education is required for everyone, I admit, but it is not half so important in the business world as real ability and determination.

We must learn to fight for everything we obtain, otherwise we lose the desire to succeed.

Miss Devine, c/o Melbourne P.O., Melbourne Cl.

THIS INEFFICIENCY

WHEN I married I had little experience in home-making and housework, but my friends assured me blandly that I would "pick it up."

Now, having "picked it up," I am astounded at my appalling ignorance and the ignorance of housewives in general.

These are some of the subjects I wish I had studied instead of higher mathematics: the chemical analysis of food, so that I could be sure of preparing well-balanced meals—the diagnosis of common ailments, and nursing, so that I could be useful in times of sickness—psychology, so that I could have a basis for married happiness—modern political science, so that I could take an intelligent interest in public affairs, and that my vote would mean something.

It is a slur on modern efficiency that young people are asked to take up such a job without training.

Mrs. A. G. Brown, Underhill Avenue, Indooroopilly SW2, Brisbane.

♦ ♦ ♦

SOCIAL FAIR PLAY

WHY is it that many people at socials cheat so openly over competitions?

Certainly the competition is not usually regarded with any real seriousness, but rather as something to add to the variety of a social programme.

It is appalling how these people can see no wrong in cheating on these occasions. Yet those who enjoy working at these competitions in an honorable way so often have to see the cheat carry off the prize.

H. Hill, 48 Main North Rd., Prospect, S.A.

♦ ♦ ♦

WOMEN'S VOTE

THERE are many clever women who have a knowledge of politics, but they are in the minority.

The average woman knows very little about the subject, yet she is forced to vote.

Unless people know what they are voting for, and are capable of comprehending the ultimate result of a poll, it is ridiculous that they should be expected to do so.

Only those who can pass a test on local and national politics should be granted a vote.

Mrs. Sylvia G. Saxton, 97 Military Road, Neutral Bay, N.S.W.

This can happen to you!

Those Awful Pains After Meals

A warning that your stomach needs attention

Flashing, Palpitation, Feeling of Over-fulness are the first slight symptoms of stomach trouble. A few doses of De Witt's Antacid Powder will soon rectify them, and tone up the digestive system so that you get no more discomfort.

NEGLECT OF EARLY TROUBLES LEADS TO GASTRITIS AND DYSPEPSIA

Even though you are so unfortunate as to suffer from the severer forms of stomach trouble, you can still hope. De Witt's Antacid Powder neutralises the excess acid immediately it enters the stomach, thus stopping the pain almost at once. The inflamed stomach is protected from further attack. A portion of your food is digested by this remarkable powder. Finally, your stomach is toned up and nursed back to health, so that you can eat what you like without any unpleasant after-effects.

DE WITT'S ANTACID POWDER

can be taken with confidence when you feel those pains of gastritis or dyspepsia. Take it regularly according to instructions and you will be delighted with your relief from pain and return to healthy digestion.

PRICE 2/6

So can this happen to you!

Here is one of many hundreds of letters of grateful thanks we have received from one-time sufferers.

Writing from Mosman, Sydney, N.S.W., Mr. ——— says:—"If any person has suffered more intensely than I from inflamed, painful distended stomach, acid eructation (gas) and from all those discomforting and heart-breaking signs of a thoroughly disturbed digestion, then I feel profoundly sorry for that person. I bought your Powder because, for one reason, I had already bought everything else and, for another reason because the ingredients named on the canister appeared to offer something different—something with possibilities of affording relief. They did, very promptly, too, and that relief has been sustained. To-day I am well—really well; full of the joy of life and, for the first time in years, hungry as a bear."

Name withheld by request.

The original letter can be inspected at our office.

National Library of Australia http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-page4620479

THREE STRANGERS

Continued from Page 18

"NOT that I know of," was the indifferent reply. "They went to the railway station."

"Their baggage?" I inquired.

She smiled contemptuously.

"There wasn't much to speak of," she said, "and what there was they carried. If you want to see them particular their train don't go until four. They're off to Devonshire or somewhere."

I thanked the woman and hurried out. Arrived at Paddington I bought a platform ticket and hastened to where the express was standing. I saw with relief that there were still twenty minutes before it started. The long train was packed, but I found them at last—the three of them—huddled together in a third-class carriage built for six and already full to its complement. I opened the door. The boy scowled at me. Mr. Spenser greeted me courteously but with marked surprise. The girl, looking wanner and paler than ever, just smiled. I think she guessed why I had come.

"May I speak to your daughter for a moment?" I asked Mr. Spenser.

He stood up to allow her to pass. She came out on to the platform, and stood there patiently, looking inquiringly into my face.

"What is it, please?" she asked softly.

"I think you can guess, Miss Spenser," I told her. "I have come from Marketin."

She shook her head.

"He wants me to stay in London and play in films. He is quite wrong, believe me, Captain Lyson. I have no desire for that life. I should be a failure. I am aching—aching in my heart—here——" she said, her bare hand pressed to her bosom, "to get home."

"But are you sure that you understand?" I asked earnestly. "It is not only the money, but fame is a great thing. You could make a name. Marketin is not a man who makes mistakes. He is willing to sink a great deal of money—all he has in the world—to start you. There is no fear of failure. Think how different a life you would have."

"How do you know what my present life is?" she asked, with that peculiar little smile already forming at her lips.

"Only from what I have gathered," I persisted. "Your father told us frankly that his income was eighty pounds a year. Your brother is earning less than his keep. That must mean poverty for you."

"WELL, I suppose we don't seem opulent," she admitted, "and yet I, at any rate, and I believe my father, when the work goes well with him or he has caught a few trout, are happy."

She glanced at the clock.

"Listen," she went on, "I will tell you where we live. There are only four rooms and the cottage is terribly uncomfortable, but it is built on the side of what we call in Devonshire a Coombe. I go to sleep at night with the sound of the stream in my ears. I wake sometimes and there is a grey mist shrouding it and hiding us from the world. Then the sun rises and the mist fades away in silver and gold. And we have the most beautiful trees growing up towards the low-lying clouds that are so often on the moor. And when they become sparse, there is the heather and the yellow gorse, or in winter the grey skies and the booming wind. That is when I look upwards, and when I turn round and look the other way to where the stream is biting its way, tumbling and rolling towards the bottom of the Coombe, then there is the sea and its sound is always there. It soothes me to sleep. It wakes me in the morning. Just so long as I want to be awake it keeps me awake and when I want to go to sleep it soothes me to sleep. Then we have flowers—wild flowers—all around us so that we need no garden. And the scent of everything! Captain Lyson, did you walk into the hall of our little hotel?"

"Yes," I answered.

She half-closed her eyes.

"I am an ill woman," she went on, "till I get back to the scent of the Devon earth, until I hear the swaying of the trees and the song of the birds. How anyone can live up here I cannot imagine. How anyone can think here. All one's thoughts must be grotesque. There is nothing beautiful to see or touch. It may be the life for some people—big cheques and theatres and beautiful restaurants and motor cars and houses with parks to them. That may suit some. It would not suit me."

There was a terrible finality about her words, a queer look of shining happiness in her face as she talked. It was all foolishness, of course. It was all because I could not make her understand, but what was I to say? The very things which Marketin had divined in her, the things that belonged to another world which it seemed a miracle that he, the little half-mad Hungarian, should have divined, were there like an impassable barrier.

"My father is like me," she murmured. "He is very happy. He is writing his book on cheap paper with a scratchy pen, but while he writes he is in the world he loves, and when he is weary he stands at the edge of the stream and listens to all the sounds I, too, worship and watches the birds come out and the fish rise and the water come tumbling down. He is also content."

"If you stayed," I pleaded, "you would be famous even before your first picture was produced. Think what you could do for your brother."

She shook her head.

"I could do nothing for him that would be for his good," she said. "If I bought him a salaried place—would that help him? What sort of a life could he have drawing money he could not earn? Your little friend, Mr. Marketin, told me the truth about him. It may seem terrible selfishness to you, Captain Lyson, but if we are truthful to ourselves we must always be selfish. I could not help him. I have but one life to give away, and that I shall hold for myself. I must."

"You never think of marriage—of the larger places in life?" I asked.

SHE smiled and looked at me pityingly.

"Why should I trouble about such possibilities when I am already happy? I have so many more beautiful things to look at and marvel at and enjoy than anything connected with myself. Good-bye, Captain Lyson. It has been nice of you to take all this trouble. Your little friend may be right in a way. I may have a gift I know nothing about. If so, I am content not to use it."

I helped her back into the carriage. Her father courteously held out his hand and gripped mine.

"If you change your mind——" I said to the girl.

"You must come and see our stream some time when you take a summer holiday or a witner one for that matter, Captain Lyson," she interrupted quietly. "It never changes its mind."

A thin little hand waved out of the window. The train gathered speed, started smoothly on its long journey. I went back to Louis. His face fell as I told him of my failure.

"I don't understand," he admitted. "You told her everything—you explained?"

"I said very little," I acknowledged. "It would have been of no use."

"Why are you so sure?" Louis asked me curiously.

"I think," I told him, "that I must have seen what Marketin saw."

I telephoned to Marketin. Often afterwards I wished that instead I had gone to see him. An impulse, I suppose it was of pity, led me to drop him a line to his office that evening and invite him to luncheon on the following day. But Marketin's days of lunching at the Milan Grill were over. The last edition of the evening papers paid him the tribute of a placard—

WELL-KNOWN CINEMA AGENT FOUND SHOT IN HIS OFFICE.

The morning papers had a sympathetic little memoir. There was nothing in his affairs which offered any explanation of his suicide, but then Marketin, after all, had some touch of genius which accounted for his queer ways. I wondered whether the newspapers ever found their way into that lonely corner of Devonshire, whether the girl herself would spare a stray thought for her would-be prophet as she listened to the ceaseless tumbling and music and thunder of her beloved stream falling into the sea.

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CORN FLAKES beat them all hollow!

...says this family that made Kellogg's *Blindfold Test

*374 people, and scores of famous taste experts such as Champion Cooks, Wine Tasters, and highly paid Chefs, have now made Kellogg's famous Blindfold Test.

Each person tastes four popular flaked breakfast cereals, including Kellogg's Corn Flakes, whilst blindfolded, and is asked to vote for the one that tastes best. (Each cereal is referred to by number only.) Amazing as it may seem, 374 votes out of 374 have gone to Kellogg's Corn Flakes. All agree that Kellogg's Corn Flakes are on their own for flavour.

KELLOGG'S CORN FLAKES, MADE FROM A SPECIALLY-GROWN WHITE AUSTRALIAN CORN, ARE THE ONLY CORN FLAKES MADE IN AUSTRALIA!

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Mandrake the Magician

THE STORY SO FAR:

MANDRAKE: Master magician, and

LOTHAR: His giant Nubian servant, are endeavoring to rescue

M. DUCHAMP: Eminent Parisian chemist, who, under the malevolent influence of

THE COBRA: Wizard of hypnosis and telepathy, has kidnapped

SUZETTE: His own lovely daughter, and taken her to the Cobra's mysterious demesne in Tibet, Mandrake and Lothar encounter many obstacles on their way to the Cobra's cavelands. Just before they reach the entrance, the Cobra sends out starved eagles, each "with the strength and fury of a wounded tiger," to attack them. The travellers, taken by surprise, endeavor to ward the eagles off. NOW READ ON.

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Murder at Midnight!

YES—he killed them! But this murder was justified. For years they had been doing their deadly work . . . undermining his health and ruining his teeth — those millions of deadly dental decay germs.

One night he changed to Euthymol Tooth Paste — and killed those deadly dental decay germs.

Euthymol destroys dental decay germs within less than thirty seconds' contact. It's more than just a polishing agent or cleanser. It's a germicidal dentifrice.

Every batch of Euthymol Tooth Paste is guaranteed to have a definite bacteriological power.

And every batch of Euthymol is given a strict bacteriological test.

Ask for Euthymol Tooth Paste.

Use it twice a day, your breath will be sweet, and your teeth will be clean and sparkling.

Euthymol Tooth Paste is 1/3 everywhere. When you buy your tube of Euthymol ask for a free copy of the new authentic booklet, "How to Save Your Teeth." This booklet was published to help stamp out the growing menace of dental decay in Australia.***

MANY *a* GOOD FISH

Continued from Page 8

SHE swung out into the road. For a moment her imagination ran ahead, and she saw herself out-diving, out-riding, out-going the incomparable Peggy. But only for a moment. She wasn't too bad at sports, but she was no champion.

She pulled up in front of the house, and sat there a minute. If she could just do something to show Peter! Here she sat, Alison Brent, actually trying to think of a way to bring a man to her side! She who had never lifted a finger if a man showed a preference for another girl. Oh, no—it would have been beneath her dignity—so long as the man never showed a preference! Now she searched her thoughts and realised that nothing — from love potions to blackmail—would be beneath her dignity.

She got out of the car and slammed the door. At the front door she had an inspiration. A dance—an occasion where the gentler social assets might prove their worth. She had a new cream-colored organdie with frills that swirled cleverly about her feet when she moved. Peggy was attractive enough in various outdoor get-ups, but that slightly weathered charm, no matter how fresh and youthful, would never thrive under candle-light.

What a marvellous idea! A dance!

. . . . . .

Alison stood at the top of the backstairs.

"Maggie! Don't let John put too much French chalk on the floor," she shouted. "Mr. George fell down three times last autumn."

Maggie's mellow chuckle answered her, and Alison heard the slow steps make their way to the front of the house. She went to her room and applied last-minute touches.

Usually, she finished in a scramble, to the accompaniment of remarks from below. Peter had once stood at the foot of the stairs and threatened to come up and wash her face if she didn't come along. She sighed. He probably wouldn't be in such a hurry to see her to-night.

She pinned three cream-colored roses on her shoulder. George had sent great armfuls, the last-blooming variety from his mother's famous garden. She ran down the stairs.

Cars began to stop outside. She went to the front-door. George, with two hilarious couples, surged up the steps.

"You know where to go," she said happily. "As usual — girls in my room, men in the back spare-room."

George paused to regard her admiringly.

"Another rose," he remarked solemnly. "The fairest rose of them all."

"They're gorgeous, George," she assured him. "Something tells me it's going to be a good evening."

A sense of power swept over Alison. The floor was of exactly the right smoothness. Everybody was in high spirits. She herself had never looked better in her life. To-night Peter would see for himself. See them all asking her for dances; see George—who, though it was crude to think of it in that way, had the only decent income of the lot—pursuing her with his consistent fervor. It would be like old times. Like old times, when they all did defer to her and admire her.

But where was Peter, where was Peggy, the guest of honor? Everyone else had arrived.

There was a ripple of excitement near the door. It seemed that everything grew suddenly still; it seemed that breaths were held. Only the music grew louder, more emphatic. She turned in George's grasp. She saw them.

There they were. Peter and Peggy. Peter, looking like the answer to anyone's prayer. And Peggy, whom she had thought to surpass at a party, who should have looked tousled and out of place in evening dress—Peggy, looking the slickest thing that ever happened!

She achieved a welcoming smile, automatically hospitable. Nobody noticed. Peggy was holding court and Peter was watching Peggy. Peggy bestowed gleaming smiles. Peggy gestured animatedly, the perfection of her brown arms and shoulders expressive against the background of a white satin dress that fitted her like her own commendable skin.

From then on blurred pictures flashed before Alison in a procession overwhelmingly convincing. Peggy besieged by partners. Peggy laughing up at Peter, her brown eyes melting in her elfin face.

Oh, he danced with Alison, of course! He even said, "Marvellous party, Alison. You look topping!"

For a moment her heart lifted. For a moment she had the illusion of her old careless power over him. She looked up. His eyes, over her shoulder, were seeking Peggy, and she knew that he had spoken merely as a dutiful guest.

From then on nothing mattered. The party dragged on for hours, and Alison hardly knew what was happening.

ALISON climbed out of George's car and strolled about. After six hours on the road one's legs felt stiff. Last year she had driven down to the country with Peter, and hadn't she regarded herself as especially fortunate.

This year Peter hadn't brought his car at all. This year Peter was coming down with Peggy and another couple in her big sports car.

For the past six hours Alison had been visualising Peggy sitting capably at the wheel. For the past six hours Alison had been rehearsing gloomily her own intended course of conduct.

There had been no way of getting out of this holiday, of course. She had always gone before, and everybody expected her to go. It was an annual affair, this week spent up on the moors, walking and fishing and swimming at a shooting-lodge lent them by George's father. For her to back out at the last minute wouldn't have done at all.

George watched her a minute before he began to drag the luggage out of the car. It came to her that she'd been a particularly uninteresting travelling companion. And after all her good resolutions, too—her determination to be a good sport.

She produced a brilliant smile. "The fog's lifting, George, my boy," she told him. "I'm about to make a remark now at any minute."

George looked thoughtful, then his broad, kind face fell into lines of dreamy contemplation. "I'm a seventh son of a seventh son," he began. "Don't I make you think of a mystic, somehow? When you see what——"

Just then Peter and Peggy appeared round the corner of the house; they had been waiting for George to arrive with the keys, so she never knew what George had been going to say.

The six days that followed were one long offence against Alison's peace of mind.

In the first place, there was about them a nightmarish quality of frenzied activity. With Peggy in command there was no end to human ingenuity. They swam. They walked. At night they turned on the wireless and danced.

And always they went fishing. Peggy made rather a point of the fact that few of her sex were sufficiently enlightened sportsmen to appreciate the subtleties of trout fishing.

In the second place, Alison—doggedly determined to be a good sport—was impelled to follow the rest of the hypnotised group. Once she thought, in a stunned way, that Peggy was like the Pied Piper. "If she'd just pipe us all into the mountain and go home," she muttered, and remembered other holidays they had had. Long, lovely lazy days. Lying in the sun, splashing idly in the water. The beautiful casual games of rummy or bridge. Talking comfortably now to Peter, his compelling smile turned on her with the warmth it held only for Peggy.

She drew a long tired breath. Peter was Peggy's One-and-Only now, all right. The other men provided merely a background.

Occasionally Peter smiled at Alison vaguely, kindly, and spoke to her as one childhood friend to another.

George, of course, just didn't bother with any of it. He joined the rest when the spirit moved him; he could do things well enough for that matter.

The last day dawned. To-night, Alison thought, with a grim relief, she would be at home—at home, and at peace. She'd done her best, she'd accomplished exactly nothing, and it occurred to her that it would be delightful indeed never to set eyes on any of them again.

The day was faintly cloudy, with a little drifting breeze. At breakfast Peggy arranged a last expedition to her favorite stream. Alison repressed an impulse to inquire if anyone had actually caught a trout yet.

Please turn to Page 26

GREY WOOL fashions this dress worn by Rita Johnson, M.-G.-M. player. It features modified leg-o'-mutton sleeves and a wide belt with a huge fabric buckle.

The Wonder Tablet

Take It!

And Stop Limping

LEG ACHES and pains soon vanish when Elasto is taken. Painful swollen (varicose) veins are restored to a healthy condition, skin troubles clear up, leg wounds become clean and healthy and quickly heal, piles disappear, inflammation and irritation are soothed, rheumatism simply fades away and the whole system is braced and strengthened. This is not magic, *although the relief does seem magical*, it is the natural result of revitalised blood and improved circulation brought about by Elasto; *the tiny tablet with wonderful healing powers.*

Not a Drug, But a Vital Cell-Food!

You naturally ask—What is Elasto? This question is fully answered in an interesting booklet which explains in simple language how the Elasto acts through the blood. Your copy is free—see offer below. Suffice it to say here that Elasto is not a drug, but a vital cell-food which *must* be present in the blood to ensure complete health. It restores to the blood the vital elements which combine with the blood albumin to form organic elastic tissue, and thus enables *Nature* to restore elasticity to the broken-down and devitalised fabric of veins, arteries and heart, and so to re-establish normal circulation, *the real basis of sound health!* Prepared in small, delicate tablets by a special process, Elasto dissolves *instantly* on the tongue and is absorbed *directly* into the blood-stream, thereby actually restoring the natural power of healing to the blood.

Every sufferer should test this wonderful new biological remedy, which quickly brings ease and comfort and creates within the system a new health force, stimulating the growth of new, healthy tissue cells to replace worn out and diseased tissues, increasing vitality and bringing into full activity Nature's own powers of healing. Elasto is the pleasantest, the cheapest and the most effective remedy ever devised. For the outlay of a few shillings you can now enjoy the tremendous advantages of this modern scientific remedy which has cost thousands of pounds to perfect.

What Users of Elasto say

"No sign of varicose veins now."
"Completely healed my varicose veins."
"Rheumatoid arthritis gone; I have never felt better."
"Varicose Veins quickly healed after 12 years of useless bandaging."
"Elasto has banished my Eczema."
"Now walk long distances with ease."
"I am free from rheumatism and neuritis."
"My heart is quite sound again now."

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Simply send your name and address to ELASTO, Box 1552/E, Sydney for your FREE copy of the interesting Elasto booklet. Or better still get a supply of Elasto (with booklet enclosed) from your chemist to day and see for yourself what a wonderful difference Elasto makes. Obtainable from chemists and stores everywhere. Price 7/6 one month's supply.

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FOR KIDDIES' GRUBBY HANDS AND KNEES—SOLVOL! IT DOES AWAY WITH TROUBLESOME SCRUBBING. JUST A WASH WITH THE PENETRATING SOLVOL LATHER REMOVES EVEN GROUND-IN DIRT... AND IT'S AS GENTLE AS FINE TOILET SOAP.

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SOLVOL cleans hands in 30 seconds!

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Real Life Stories

Prizes for Stories

EVERY week we pay for real life stories a first prize of £1/1/- and 5/- for all others published. Endeavor to keep your story within 300 words. Post it to "Real Life Stories," The Australian Women's Weekly (full address at top of page 2).

FOOLHARDY *Journey Brought* ROMANCE

Adventure in Colombo

"Journeys end in lovers' meetings." Mrs. Flora Kidson, who wins this week's guinea prize for the best real-life story, made a foolhardy journey by herself in Colombo, and was rescued by a helpful young man who is now her husband.

DURING my recent trip to England, our ship, as usual, called at Colombo. There, despite the well-meant warnings of several of the ship's officers, I went ashore with a couple of friends and purposely lost them in the crowd, to pursue my explorations alone.

I was, of course, soon pestered by rickshaw boys who wished to take me for a tour of the native quarters. Choosing the most honest-looking one I started out all agog with curiosity. Soon the streets were lined with squalid little huts and dusky mothers, some of whom were bathing their small offspring in the street.

By this time, however, my curiosity was somewhat lessened by the dirt and malodors which surrounded me, and I wished to return. My rickshaw boy, however, had other ideas on the matter. In vain were my now thoroughly frightened protests and pleadings. He insisted that there was still much of interest to be seen. By this time I was thoroughly panicky and alarmed.

After a few more minutes of heated argument, I espied a white man about 50 yards away. I hailed him, and explained my predicament. He agreed to return to the ship with me, and after a few words in the native tongue we were, much to my relief, on the way back to the ship.

During conversation on the way back, I learned that my rescuer's name was Peter Kidson, and that, strange to say, he was boarding the ship that night. Of course, our friendship ripened, as ship friendships do, in an incredibly short time, but, unlike most, we resumed acquaintanceship after we landed. I married Peter six months later, and many a laugh we have over our first meeting in Ceylon.

£1/1/- to Mrs. Flora Kidson, Lake Illawarra South, South Coast, N.S.W.

OUR FRIENDSHIP RIPENED, as ship friendships do . . .

Veritable Treasure Chest

SOME years ago, I was employed in a shop which specialised in furniture on the lay-by plan. Among our customers were a young couple—obviously engaged.

They both took a fancy to a cedar chest and paid a deposit on it.

Evidently they did their week-end shopping on Friday evenings, for they would arrive somewhat breathless just before closing-time, the girl with a bulging shopping-bag, and her fiance with a case.

The chest appeared to fascinate them, for, having paid the weekly sum required, they would stand gazing at it, after an apologetic smile in my direction. Being of a romantic turn of mind, I had the chest moved into a far corner, so that they could enthuse over it in comparative seclusion. I even procured the key of the drawers, so that (as the girl explained) they could feel that it was almost theirs. They were several months paying for it, but at length the final payment was due, and they arranged to call at the usual time on Friday evening.

Imagine my dismay when they entered the shop, followed by a detective, who promptly arrested them. The chest was filled with the proceeds of a perfect orgy of shoplifting.

I afterwards learnt that the couple were old hands at the game, and, knowing they were under suspicion, they had hit upon the idea of using the chest as a "lay-by"—in case they were searched on reaching home. The chest would have been delivered on the following day, and no one would have been any the wiser.

5/- to Mrs. H. Barnes, 6 Cornish St., St. Leonards, S.A.

Stage Resourcefulness

IT happened during a school concert.

A huge canvas was stretched across the stage, under which several boys were engaged to move about swelling the canvas to make it seem like waves, on which a boat and crew were tossing.

The canvas must have been thin in places, or else there was a hole, for as one of the crew was making a speech the audience and actors were dumbfounded to see a boy's head appear above the water.

With great presence of mind one lad, seeing the success of the act in danger, yelled lustily, "Ahoy! Man overboard!" and before the bewildered crew knew what had happened he had effected a rescue, dragging the boy into the boat.

The act was a huge success. No one was aware that the incident was unrehearsed until after the final curtain.

5/- to Pearl Dales, 88 Flood Street, Leichhardt, N.S.W.

Frocks of Wattle Blossom

WHEN girls in our early teens, my sister and I made a habit of an early morning ride, leaving home at 6 a.m., with a towel over our saddles to swim in a dam four miles from our home.

There was never any traffic on those back roads so early, and we enjoyed that swim in our "birthday suits" more than anything; but, alas, it was not too long before someone found out, and played a practical joke on us.

Every stitch of our clothes disappeared, with the exception of our hats, so we had to set to and gather armfuls of wattle blossom to provide emergency clothing.

With the help of our towels we managed to drape the lovely blossoms sufficiently over our bodies to present a respectable appearance while we rode through the town to our home, where we found our clothes hanging over the manger in the stables.

Following us out on his bike, our young brother had decided to stop us swimming in the dam, which he considered dangerous. He had frequently warned us, but we laughed at him, so he acted, instead of giving further advice.

Yes, we still went swimming, but we always packed our clothes very neatly under the ponies' saddles, and left the ponies tied at a tree where we could keep our eyes on them.

5/- to Miss C. Coney, 84 Queen St., Ararat, Vic.

You have no idea how refreshing a bath *can* be until you've bathed with Wright's Coal Tar Soap. Wright's health-giving antiseptic lather cleanses pores thoroughly and destroys infection, while its special oils gently stimulate and 'tone' the skin. Because it helps your skin to do its work perfectly, you feel fresh and buoyant all day after a bath with Wright's. It is the toilet soap that doctors themselves use more than any other. And the *only* toilet soap that's gained the Blue Seal of Merit, highest award of the Institute of Hygiene. 1-67

WRIGHT'S
Coal Tar Soap

Just 10/- POST FREE BRINGS TO YOU *Your own Printed Notepaper*

150 SHEETS
100 ENVELOPES
BEST BRITISH BOND

Crisp, fresh, and pen-perfect white British Bond—size 9 ins. x 7 ins. printed either with your name, address and 'phone number, or your address and 'phone number, or your address only. Please send particulars when ordering.

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Her doctor has told her that **MUM** is the *SAFE* DEODORANT

SAFE—because MUM deals only with dispelling objectionable perspiration *odour—it does not interfere with the natural process of perspiration,* which is Nature's way of throwing off the poisons of the body. MUM is the modern deodorant—just a touch of this perfumed cream rubbed into the armpits ensures personal daintiness throughout the most hectic day. *No waiting—no rinsing.*

You can use MUM at any time—after you're dressed or during the day, because MUM is harmless to fabric.

You can use MUM after shaving—it has cool, soothing properties that are beneficial to sensitive skins.

Women who use MUM regularly each month know that MUM is the safe and efficient deodorant for this particular form of unpleasantness.

At all Chemists. Price 1/6, Double size 2/6.

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Test for 1 Month

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A perfectly safe hearing aid. Non-electrical—Practically invisible—No wires—No batteries—No head-bands. Obtainable direct from new Sydney consulting rooms.

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Suite 601F, City Mutual Bldg., Cr. Hunter & Bligh Sts., Sydney and 115 Collins St., Melbourne

Piles Disappear

No Cutting or Salves Needed.

External treatments seldom banish piles.

Nor does cutting remove the cause.

The cause is inside—bad circulation.

The blood is stagnant, the veins flabby.

The bowel walls are weak, the parts almost dead.

To quickly and safely rid yourself of piles you must free the circulation—send a fresh current through stagnant pools. Internal treatment is the one safe method. Ointments and cutting won't do it.

J. S. Leonhardt, M.D., a specialist, set at work some years ago to find a real internal remedy for piles. He succeeded. He named his prescription Vaculoid, and tried it in 1,000 cases before he was satisfied. Now Vaculoid is sold by chemists everywhere, under guarantee. It is a harmless tablet, easy to take, and the makers will gladly refund the purchase price to any dissatisfied customer.

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REDUCE SAFELY

with FORD'S CORPOREAL CAPSULES

A Kensington lady writes: "I have reduced from 11 stone to 9 stone 2lbs." This is a scientifically correct treatment, endorsed by leading doctors. No dieting or exercising. Three weeks' treatment, 5/6; six weeks, 10/-; at all chemists, or post free from NOEL F. FORD, M.P.S. (Syd. Uni.), Chemist, 247 King Street, Newtown. Tel. LT12.

DEAF?

"Chico" Invisible Earphones, 21/- pr.

Worn inside your ears, no cords or batteries. Guaranteed for your lifetime. Write for free booklet.

MEARS EARPHONE CO., 14 State Shopping Block, MARKET ST., SYDNEY.

The AUSTRALIAN WOMEN'S WEEKLY RADIO SESSIONS . . . from STATION 2GB

(Featured by Dorothea Vautier)

WEDNESDAY, March 16.—11.45 a.m.: Serial, "Pride and Prejudice," by Jane Austen. 2.45 p.m.: The Fashion Parade.

THURSDAY, March 17.—11.45 a.m.: Serial. 2.45 p.m.: People in the Limelight.

FRIDAY, March 18.—11.45 a.m.: Serial. 2.45 p.m.: Musical Cocktail.

SATURDAY, March 19.—7.45 p.m.: The Music Box. 9.30 p.m.: New Mayfair Orchestra and Clarice Mayne (comedienne).

SUNDAY, March 20.—4.30 p.m.: Celebrity Singer Recital, Emmy Bettendorf (soprano). 6.10 p.m.: The Czech Philharmonic Orchestra and Gerhard Husch (baritone).

MONDAY, March 21.—11.45 a.m.: Serial. 2.45 p.m.: Review of The Australian Women's Weekly.

TUESDAY, March 22.—11.45 a.m.: Serial. 2.45 p.m.: The Homemaker, Mrs. Eve Gye.

BETTY'S *"Racey"* NARRATIVES

Sackcloth And Ashes At Warwick Farm

By BETTY GEE

Fancy coming back to Sydney's hottest March on record to back losers when Melbourne offered Mananui at 5 to 1, Turf Boy at 9 to 2, and Courage at 3 to 1, at Caulfield.

All 18-carat "good things," and they all won.

DICKIE said it was the "after-game" when I read they'd won in the papers. But I assured him I simply couldn't have helped backing them if I had been at Caulfield. They stuck out like the new starched veils.

The appropriate dress for Warwick Farm on Saturday should have been shorts. I mean for going there.

Coming home it was sackcloth and ashes.

I got there in time to see the dashing Mr. George Tancred drop a hundred-pound bet on to Kai Tere for the first Maiden race. I needed no further incentive to take £3 to £1, and it was just a shame for the bookmaker what Kai Tere did to the field. He gave them the biggest start and beating. A champion, this. All the "heads" said, "follow him."

All right, we will.

I was just counting my £6 to £1 on Lornlee as won when down swooped an Irish gentleman by the name of Pat and snatched away my winnings, the brute.

I noticed the stewards said after the race that "Lornlee hung." Well, I wouldn't be cruel to a good thoroughbred, but there are worse deaths than hanging.

Mrs. Marjorie Wheeler told me Rancher, owned by her dad, Mr. Percy Miller, for the second Nursery.

I thought it was lucky, too, because the tote clerk gave her the wrong number in the race before last, and it turned out to be Pat, who paid £14/1/ for £1. Can you beat that?

But Rancher couldn't. He is a slow starter but a swift finisher, but made his run too late to make my pound bet any good. We'll have to look for Rancher on a bigger course.

Eavesdropping as Peter Riddle went past, I heard him say to a companion that he was mad if he didn't back Vestal for the Novice, so I made great haste to the ring and had £4/10/ to £2 about his chance.

But he arrived about a 14th of a second too late, and was beaten by a length by Silver Wave.

Now For Hawkesbury!

Already I am raking the bottom of my suede-matched bag, and all I can find is 10/ for Hamurah at 5 to 1, and she won easily enough. But I didn't know whether to laugh or cry at having only the dregs of my purse on her.

Actually, it didn't matter, because 30/ of my winnings went on Kirrang in the March Handicap. Will Pratt, her trainer, said she couldn't lose, as she was doing gallops that would win a Sydney Cup.

But it's too late to tell me now that races are different to track gallops. In races they don't give a horse the whole course to itself.

The last £1 went on Montague in the last race. He has the race won everywhere but the winning post, and I'm just savoring my £4 collect when up bobs Brazillian and snatches the winnings from my grasp.

We travel to faraway Hawkesbury on Saturday, and you've to be careful to choose horses there who can skid round the sharp corners on one wheel. Such a horse, I'm told, is Lady Curia, for the Juvenile.

But the Head Waiter's special is Salamyne, for the Windsor Handicap.

I've had a whisper, too, that Lucky Kid is so much benefited from her trip to Melbourne that she's a good thing next time she starts, and if it happens to be in the Welter at Hawkesbury she's worthy of an investment.

They all say Ajax is a certainty for the Doncaster, but CAN he go on beating all our horses with cartloads of weight on his back?

I'm not saying he can't win, but for my Doncaster and Cup double there's nothing to prevent my taking a rival, Evening Mist, and I'm joining her with Elanage. Besides, I've some inside information that Ajax won't start.

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Intimate Jottings by Caroline

DID YOU KNOW—

That Colonel Eric Campbell favors the quiet but charming Harbord for week-end surfing?

* * *

Pageantry of Portraits

DAME ENID LYONS came specially to Sydney to receive the debutantes at the March of Time Ball at the Town Hall on Friday night. Lady Julius made the formal introductions.

Pageantry was introduced in the form of tableaux vivants, with well-knowns representing famous pictures.

Margot Ruthven posed for Greuse's Fidelity, Dorothy Browning was Madame Pompadour for the occasion, and Jocelyn Paggett donned a large hat and silk panniers for Gainsborough's Duchess of Devonshire.

Among the official party were the Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress (Alderman and Mrs. Nock), Mrs. George Parkes, Group Captain Delarue, Miss Yvonne Delarue, Brigadier and Mrs. Hardie, Sir Frederick and Lady Jordan, and Mrs. Bobbie Terry. Crippled soldiers will benefit from the party.

* * *

Mrs. Guy Stephens and her two small sons, Sam and Hugh, are staying with her father, Dr. A. J. Dodds, at Lindfield. Her husband has just recovered from a recent appendix operation, and will shortly return to Walcha.

* * *

Antique Piano

ONE of the most interesting exhibits at the showing of musical instruments arranged for Music Week, at the Blaxland Galleries, is an antique piano lent by Dr. and Mrs. Edward Ludowici.

It was brought to Australia in 1838 by Mrs. John Hawdon, Mrs. Ludowici's grandmother. It began its Australian episode at the Cowpastures, and then travelled to the South Coast to Mr. Hawdon's grant at Kiora. A hundred years ago a piano was a rare possession, and tenants from the Hawdon estate considered it a great treat to be taken in to the homestead to see and hear this instrument.

Mrs. Wilson, of Gordon, formerly Annie Hawdon, used to practise on it when a little girl. Granddaughters of the original owner, Mrs. Horace Buck, of Woolwich, and Mrs. W. G. Woolnough, of Canberra, are looking forward to hearing its dulcet tones at a concert during the Exhibition.

* * *

St. Philip's Church has been chosen for the wedding of Hazel Horley, elder daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Conrad Horley, of Pennant Hills, and George Vaughan, who will be married this Wednesday. Reception is to be at Elizabeth Bay House.

* * *

Enjoying Their Holiday

FROM Adelaide comes news of the Dan Thompson family, who are on board the Parakoola, England bound. Perfect weather has been their lot so far. While in Melbourne Mrs. Thompson attended the races, and had the good luck to collect on every race.

Her friend, Mrs. Cliff Kitchen, a passenger on board the Orion, was in Melbourne to welcome them, and the E. J. Watts, who were visiting Melbourne, entertained them at a dinner-party.

Queen's Club News

MAUDE MARY MACKAY, secretary of the Queen's Club for the past twenty-five years, is enjoying a few weeks' holiday in West Australia. I'm told that she intends retiring soon after her return.

Miss Mackay is a personal friend of most of the members. She has a remarkable memory, and members who arrive at the club after a long absence are always sure of being greeted by name.

In her delightful suite of rooms at the club, Miss Mackay has a fine collection of china and mahogany.

A RECENT PORTRAIT of lovely Mrs. John Collins, of Nindooimbah, Queensland. Her husband, a noted flier, is piloting his plane to Sydney this week to take her back to the north.—Le Gay.

Independent Theatre Party

THE second of the "At Homes" arranged by the Independent Theatre at the Hotel Australia was good fun. Most varied was the programme presented. Marie Bremner, who wore a perfectly charming frock of black taffeta, with insets of tulle to soften the neckline, Anne Mills, Fraser Coss, Leo Darnton, Ramsay Pennicuick and Frederick Hyde contributed items. The one-act play presented, "Charlotte Russe," was madly merry with much dashing about the centuries by heroine, hero, and stern parent.

Mrs. Hubert Fairfax was among the audience, also Norda Mata, the German dancer, who also visited Sydney several years ago. Mr. and Mrs. Will Ashton, Mrs. J. L. Ruthven, and Colonel and Mrs. Gordon.

Races at Geebung

AT present visiting Walcha are Rose Merivale, who is the guest of the Arthur Fenwickes at Wallington, and Yvonne Parker, who is staying with her sister, Mrs. Jim Nivison, at Ohio. Also staying in the district are Nea Tully, of Brisbane, who makes Ohio North her headquarters, and Mrs. Douglas Munro, formerly Barbara White, who is staying with her sister-in-law, Mrs. Poss Nivison.

The local Show and races at the delightfully named Geebung will be two attractions for the visitors.

* * *

Mr. and Mrs. Harold Cox, of Wollongong, have gone to New Zealand, where they will make a stay of some months.

* * *

Pauline Parsons Engaged

GOOD wishes will cross Bass Strait by the dozen when news of Pauline Spencer-Parsons' engagement to Roger Bowling becomes known in this city. Pauline, you remember, made a long stay in Sydney as the guest of Clara Butter, and proved a very popular visitor.

Roger is the elder son of Mr. and Mrs. F. R. Bowling, of Saundridge, Cressy, and Pauline's mother lives at Wincanton, Grove, Huon.

* * *

Long-suffering Mannequins

A LESSON in savoir-faire was there for all to profit by at the Food For Babies Mannequin Parade at the Hotel Australia last week. One one of the hottest days of the summer, the pretty girls who acted as mannequins wore furs in great profusion with stoic calm. Colored ninon veils, in new and fascinating designs, leg-of-mutton sleeves and other fashion fancies of the 'nineties were featured during the parade.

Among the smart audience were the Lady Mayoress (Mrs. Norman Nock), Mrs. John Bellsario, Mrs. Garnet Halloran, Mrs. E. N. Tooth, Mrs. Derby Louden, and Madame Kveton.

"Picnics" at Yass

HERE'S hoping for gentle rains early this week to put the country people of the south in a good mood for the Yass Picnic Races this Thursday. Incidentally, rain will be required to lay the dust if fair wearers of charming frocks hope to look their best.

Joyce Massy, of Severn Park, who won the ladies' race at the Cooma picnics, will be there. Other racing fans who never miss a meeting at Yass are the Jim Gibbs, from Stirling, Cootamundra, Peter Milsons, from Laverstock, Phyl Ashton, Mr. and Mrs. Roy Smith, and Mr. and Mrs. Noel Eedy.

* * *

Dr. and Mrs. Throsby are entertaining their daughter, Mrs. Rex Futter, of Bowral. Mrs. Futter came to town to choose her winter wardrobe.

* * *

Big Family Reunion

HAZEL FAITHFUL, of Springfield, Goulburn, married Yorke Henderson, and her sister, Valerie, married Yorke's brother, Garham. So there will be a great family reunion when the Yorke Hendersons arrive in England with their two sons, Peter and Geoffrey, next month. Yorke and his wife have made their home in England for some years.

Mrs. Yorke is contemplating putting her son, Bob, to boarding school, and coming out with the travellers when they return, as she is anxious to visit her mother, Mrs. Lucien Faithful.

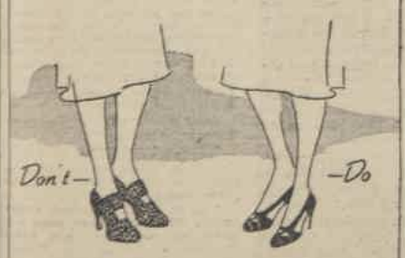
* * *

HAVE YOU HEARD—

That Lorna Robinson is coming back from England on April 22? She has chosen the Panama Canal route, and will stay at Pomeroy, Macleay Street, when she arrives.

FASHION WISDOM . . . By Colette

If you have short, broad feet—



Don't add thickness with buckles, wide straps, brocade, reptile, or alligator shoes.

Do break the width with simple, lengthening lines. Opera pumps are excellent. If you want straps, the size and shape are important. Medium curving strap is all right. Have your stockings tone in with shoes.

If your shoulders are broad—

FASHION ACCLAIMS THE CHIC OF CUTEX SMOKY SHADES

Soft, glowing colours that flatter your hands. Ask your favourite shop to show you the new soft "Smoky" shades that are especially flattering. Old Rose, Mauve, Rust, Robin Red. Remember that Cutex has a wonderful new polish that applies easier . . . wears longer . . . resists thickening in the bottle.

Send 9d in stamps for Cutex trial kit containing all the materials necessary for a complete manicure

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MANY *a* GOOD FISH

"THAT big fellow simply mustn't get away from us," Peggy was saying eagerly.

Alison got up from the table and left the room. Soon she came back, wearing a linen frock, a pair of canvas sandals, and a shady hat. She carried two cushions, a P. G. Wodehouse, and a large umbrella.

The breakfasters looked up at her, faces questioning. Peggy said: "Why, Alison, where in the world are you going?"

"Fishing."

"But you can't wade a stream like that," Peter began.

Alison eyed him. True, she couldn't. She was going fishing as she liked to go fishing. It was high time that she—Alison—got a little fun out of this holiday.

"I'm not going with all of you," she said. "I'm going by myself."

Peggy looked puzzled.

"But, Alison," she said, "we've had this picnic arranged all the week. You can wear my extra waders."

"Not me," Alison said ungrammatically. She saw Peter's face fleetingly. It looked disapproving.

She left the room, swaggering slightly.

She selected a fishing-rod from the stack in the hall, a nice, thick, strong, self-reliant sort of rod. She fingered it approvingly and tucked it under her arm with the rest of her equipment.

She walked down to the lake and found a little boat and dropped her things into it.

She pulled for about two hundred yards and then shipped her oars.

She arranged her cushions luxuriously in the stern, took off her hat and threw her line overboard, resting the rod in a rowlock. She considered the sky; no sun, but there was a glare. She held the rod between her knees for a minute while she opened and adjusted the umbrella. She laid one hand on the rod, opened the book with the other, and sank back with a contented sigh.

For a while she lay there, dozing and reading. Once there was a slight pull on the line, but she pretended not to notice, and the fish, if such it was, went away.

THERE was a slight splashing sound as she sat up with a jerk. She must have been asleep. She looked round the umbrella and saw George pulling towards her leisurely.

"It's time to go," he said. "You been here all day? The others have come back and packed. I've been looking for you all over the place."

"Oh, dear!" Alison pulled in her line. It was beginning to drizzle a little.

By the time they got back to the house the other three cars were leaving.

Peter stood on the steps and glowered at them.

"We must be going, Alison," he said. "You've kept us all waiting."

Alison replied coldly: "Well, don't wait for us." Had Peter always had this bossy streak? "We can manage beautifully. Can't we, George?"

George nodded.

Peggy called out from the car and Peter turned away, muttering something about seeing them at the next stopping place. She watched him go.

When she looked round, she observed a peculiar expression on George's face. He said: "Alison ——." Then he broke off and caught her by the hand.

"Let's put the bags in the car, shall we?" They raced about collecting various overlooked items.

The rain began to come down in a serious, purposeful manner. George carried bags out to the car. Alison rushed out to help him with the roof, and they fell into the car, wet and breathless.

George stepped tentatively on the starter.

"Sometimes when this car of mine gets damp," he murmured, "nothing happens, except a sound from the starter as if it would be happy to oblige."

He got out and looked under the bonnet. Alison said mildly: "And just when did you learn the difference between a crank-shaft and a sparking-plug?"

He stood erect, the water running down his shoulders.

"I'm not sure," he said thoughtfully. "But aren't the sparking-plugs up at the top somewhere?"

"You're probably out of petrol."

He clutched at his hair.

"Out of petrol—of course!" He looked round him wildly.

His face looked stricken.

"Oh, Alison! I'll bet you could kill me. Here, come on back into the house and I'll dash up the road and borrow some."

He brought the umbrella and she climbed out of the car.

"You'll dash up what road and borrow some?" she inquired gently.

He unlocked the door of the house again. "Why—why the next place—that farmhouse——"

"Four miles, if it's a step; in this rain? We'll sit here and wait until it clears, or at least slows up."

He protested violently, furiously. It was getting late. He must start now or he wouldn't be back in time. They argued endlessly, pointlessly.

"You're being too silly for words," she told him finally. "It's not going to kill us if we have to stay the night here. There's plenty of tinned stuff."

George was horrified.

"Why, Alison, that wouldn't do at all——"

"For heaven's sake, are you worrying about my fair name? You've brought me home from plenty of dances when we didn't get back until two or three o'clock in the morning. I don't see any difference——"

They heard a distant faint halloo. Again a peculiar expression crossed George's face. The halloo came again, louder this time. They ran to a window.

Down the road trudged two dripping figures, feet picking up generous lumps of mud at each slow step.

"Good heavens! Peter and Peggy!" Alison cried.

They hurried to the front door. In a minute, the trudgers came wearily in and sank down, breathing heavily.

"Peggy's car—in a ditch," Peter began.

"I just slid right off the road. I was going too fast round a corner," Peggy broke in.

"But where are Jane and Alec?" Alison asked.

Peter spoke crossly.

"About a mile back, or a hundred judging by the way I feel; they got a lift in Jim's car. There wasn't room for us, so we came back to go with you." He paused and looked at them accusingly. "What have you been doing, anyway? We thought we'd meet you on the road."

Alison and George looked at each other, a long, resigned look.

"You tell them, George," Alison said, and giggled for no reason. George fidgeted.

Peter said: "Well, what's wrong? Buck up!"

"We're out of petrol," George whispered sheepishly.

Peter jumped up irritably.

"Well, we can't sit mooning here all day. Let's go and drain Peggy's car."

George gazed into space.

"She hasn't got much, either. Don't you remember—I meant to get some yesterday afternoon, and then didn't."

"I don't know what you all are going to do," Alison broke in, "but I'm going to stay here until this deluge stops, or slows down, anyway." She was feeling very perverse. Peter's manner implied that everything was their fault. "I'm not in a hurry."

George sighed happily.

IT was nine o'clock. Finally, they had cooked a meal and eaten it, but the atmosphere was getting worse.

Peggy was sitting huddled over the table, her hair tousled, her nose shiny. Peter pottered about dourly, picking up plates and dishes. George leaned back in a chair and puffed comfortably at his pipe.

"I do love the simple life," he murmured, and Peggy glared at him.

"Ha," thought Alison, "Peggy's temper is wearing thin."

Peggy had built the fire for supper—the wood had been wet and the stove temperamental. The careful structure conforming to all known rules of draughts and arrangement had stolidly refused to burn, until Alison, strolling by, had administered half a cup of paraffin. The resulting lovely lasting roar had, seemingly, annoyed Peggy, as had Alison's next bit of assistance. Peggy and Peter had broken the tin-opener—a flimsy article—and had fussed about with a carving-knife until Alison had gently taken the tins out of their hands and had knocked two holes in each with the wood-chopper.

Now Alison regarded them thoughtfully. Funny—Peggy was a good sport—always had been before. Peter was, too. Peter was everything nice and desirable. But was he? Would a really nice person be so upset by a trivial change in his plans, by the minor annoyance of staying an extra night there and dining on baked beans? He had been barely civil—when their evening might have been as pleasant as any of the previous ones.

Continued from Page 22

SUDDENLY she realised that Peter was only happy in the presence of perfection—of all kinds. In girls, in situations, in food. He had loved her—or at least he had seemed to—when she had been the prettiest, most popular, most nearly perfect person available. When another girl had come along who represented perfection more adequately, he had fallen for her. "And if he meets a better one than you, my girl," Alison informed Peggy soundlessly, "don't be surprised at anything that happens."

She got up abruptly.

"Come for a walk, George? It has stopped raining, now."

They wandered out down the path. George spoke idly.

"Seems as if it has worked."

She stopped.

"It has worked? George—have you been up to something?"

For a moment he didn't answer. Then:

"Well—in a manner of speaking ——"

She gave her shoulder a small shake.

"Come along—tell me all about it," she commanded.

In the light from the house his face was quiet, his faint smile an enigma.

"I wanted to leave you here with Peter and Peggy," he said at last. "I wanted him to see you and that pestilential little show-off on even terms. So when it started to rain, I let the petrol out of my car and arranged with Alec to do the same thing with Peggy's. But I didn't think she'd have that skid, and I thought they'd be a little farther away when the car stopped. I wasn't going to come back when I went for the petrol—after I had seen them pass, I was going to disappear."

Alison was thoroughly confused.

"Of all the mad schemes——"

"Well—it did the trick—those two are behaving like cat and dog. You know, he's really dead nuts on you."

Alison turned this idea over in her mind. Peter hers again. She tried to see George's face, but he was standing in the shadow.

"George," she faltered, "did—that is—do you want Peter to be—fond of me?"

He said evenly, "Certainly—you do, don't you?"

Well—no, she didn't! She felt herself begin to tremble. She didn't want Peter—never had wanted Peter—really. And now—George—had given him to her—out of—it must have been out of friendship.

"I'm sick of Peter," she whispered. Everything grew very still.

There was a huge sigh.

"Oh, Alison," George said. "Oh gosh!" He drew closer and she saw his face, saw the familiar undemanding devotion—saw other things, too, and wondered for a moment how it was that she had not seen them before. "How—about me?" he said huskily.

She reached up and laid her hand on his shoulder. A little breeze flung spray on them from the trees. A few stars appeared between dark massed clouds. Everything was perfectly lovely.

After a long time, Alison drew an inch or so away.

"George," she began in a puzzled voice, "I should have thought you'd have wanted Peter to run after Peggy—instead of——"

"My little girl must have what she wants," he countered smugly.

She looked at him suspiciously.

"But I don't want—that is, I don't—nobody could like him the way he——"

With a low chuckle he pulled her close again.

her face.

"You knew," she said. "You knew he'd behave like that."

"Perhaps I did," he said against her hair.

(Copyright.)

THE MOVIE WORLD

● *FIRE IN OLD CHICAGO.—The fire that destroyed the city is the big spectacle of "In Old Chicago," 20th Century-Fox's costly film. Above, left: Don Ameche runs for Mayor. Right: Alice Faye as a music-hall singer. Below, left: Tyrone Power, a shady politician, and Alice Faye. Below, centre: Alice Brady and Alice Faye.*

Calling Australia!

Moviedom News and Gossip

By JOHN B. DAVIES and BARBARA BOURCHIER
from New York and Hollywood

Love and Ginger

HOTTEST rumor in Hollywood to-day concerns the possible reconciliation of Ginger Rogers and Lew Ayres.

Separated for over a year, they have never secured a divorce, and, according to close friends, have remained very fond of each other.

Since the separation neither has gone out much. Ginger has built a new home, in which she lives with her mother. She appears at various parties, but has never been seen in the company of one Hollywood swain more than a few times.

"Dead End" Gang

WE are going to see more of the "Dead End" gang, the six boys who dominated that outstanding film. These boys, who were picked up around New York, played the same roles for two years in the Broadway production of "Dead End," and by the time they had finished the picture were really fine actors.

One or two of them have been playing odd parts in various pictures; but now the six are to be reunited in Warners' "Reform School."

Their roles will be similar to the ones they handled in "Dead End," and Humphrey Bogart will again be with them.

Charlie Chan Ill

ILLNESS has just taken Warner Oland out of his latest Charlie Chan film. The picture was barely half-finished, and its postponement would have meant the loss of thousands of dollars.

20th Century-Fox hit on the solution of having Peter Lorre finish Oland's role. Lorre, as you know, has made a series of pictures dealing with the adventures of Mr. Moto, a Japanese detective.

Half-way through the new picture, Lorre, as Mr. Moto, will appear on the screen and announce, "Since Mr. Chan has been unexpectedly called away, I will finish the case for him."

Mean to Tyrone

BASELESS stories about a rift in the Tyrone Power-Janet Gaynor romance are believed in Hollywood to have been started by Power's studio, 20th Century-Fox.

It seems the studio feels marriage at this point might be detrimental to Power's career by causing his feminine fans to lose interest. On the other hand, the studio went out of its way to foster the young actor's romance with Sonja Henie—with the obvious idea of establishing the two as a screen team. The fact remains that Power is still much in love with the dainty Janet.

COMING READY OR NOT

● The "come as you were when the summons arrived" party, which started in New York, has now hit Hollywood. The guests are honor-bound to show up at the party exactly as they were when in the invitations came.

All this has Joy Howarth worried. The Lyle Talbots, who introduced the fad, are close friends of hers, and sent her a summons early in the morning. She was just stepping out of bed, with hair uncombed, no make-up, and clad in a nightgown.

gaze amazed at KAYSER'S

new MIR-O-KLEER RINGLESS SHEER

4/11

A miracle of Sheer loveliness—made for overburdened budgets and lasses who've an eye for silken sophistry. In 19 new colorings including—BALLET, an autumn toning for Out-o doors—ENCORE, medium tan, smart for Town and Sports wear—GAIETY, fashionable mid-brown for wear anywhere—all gloriously flattering.

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Fully Fashioned Pure Silk Hosiery

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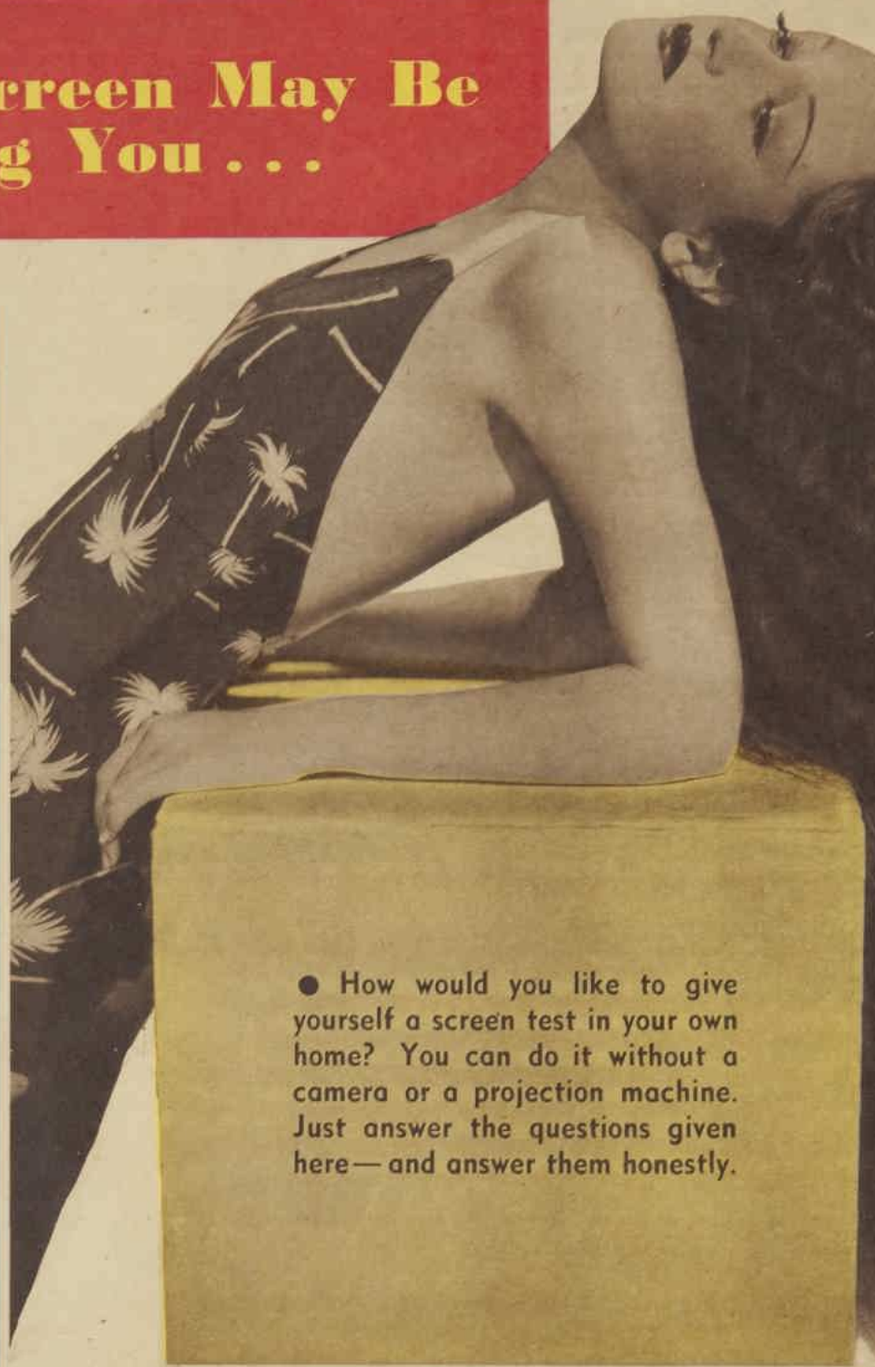
The Screen May Be Calling You . . .



● How would you like to give yourself a screen test in your own home? You can do it without a camera or a projection machine. Just answer the questions given here — and answer them honestly.

PHOTOGRAPHIC APPEAL

1—Are you under 5ft. 10in. in height, or over 6ft. 3in. (without shoes)?
2—Are you under 5ft. or over 5ft. 7in. in height (without shoes)?
3—Are you under 10 stone in weight, or over 12½ stone?
4—Are you under 8 stone 11lbs. in weight, or over 9 stone?
5—Have you a good figure?
6—Have you a photogenic face?
7—Is your face round or triangular in shape?
8—Are your eyes large or small?
9—Are they deepset?
10—Are they close together or wide apart?
11—Is your forehead well proportioned?
12—Is your hairline too far down on your forehead, or does it come forward too far at your temples?
13—Are your ears well proportioned and set close to your head?
14—Is your nose well shaped?
15—Is it prominent?
16—Are your mouth and lips the proper size and shape?
17—Do you show too much gum line when you smile?
18—Have you an attractive, straight set of teeth?
19—Have you a strong or weak chin (Men)?
20—Have you a normal, protruding, or receding chin (Women)?
21—Does your profile photograph well?
22—Have you attractive hands (Women)?
23—Are your feet of normal size (Women)?
24—Have you good posture?
25—Do you walk gracefully?

PERSONALITY AND BACKGROUND

26—Do you make friends easily?
27—Do you "wear well" (do your friends remain your friends)?
28—Are you attractive to men (For Women)?
29—Are you attractive to women (For Men)?
30—Have you a good education?
31—Are you well read?
32—Have you travelled extensively?
33—Has your work brought you in contact with many people?
34—Have you any outstanding quality that makes you distinctive either individually or in a group?

ABILITY AND EXPERIENCE

35—Are you considered intelligent?
36—Do you grasp things quickly?
37—Have you a retentive memory?
38—Is your diction good?
39—Have you any sectional accents (viz: southern, middle-western)?
40—Have you good voice quality?
41—Have you good tone modulation?
42—Are you easily moved emotionally?
43—Can you express yourself fluently and convey emotions vividly?
44—Have you had any dramatic experience?
45—If not, what kind of work have you done most closely related to it?

SPECIAL QUALIFICATIONS

46—Do you sing?
47—Do you dance?
48—If so, have you performed professionally; if not, have you had any training?
49—Are you accomplished in any special activities (sports, instruments, etc.)?
50—Have you ever been considered for a screen test?

WHEN talent scouts are hunting for new faces for the screen they do not take with them a camera or any other apparatus.

They plumb character for the extent of its talent flair.

Next, they consider the physical side and how it will reproduce in movie shadows and angles.

Fifty questions, covering every phase of what is necessary to qualify for work in the movies to-day, appear for the first time in print in this article.

The list of questions has been compiled by George Kaplan, head of a unique "University" in New York for the training of potential screen talent.

All major picture companies to-day are reaching out with veritable nets to gather in people who should be on the screen.

These nets hold only a few. They reject the great majority who would allow thoughtlessness and blind inspiration to precipitate them from their successful native spheres into the maelstrom of disillusionment and grief which is the lot of the guest without the wedding garment in Hollywood.

Six years ago Paramount decided the industry needed a talent laboratory. So it set up this laboratory in New York.

Frances Farmer, according to picture men, wouldn't be featured in "Ebb Tide," quite likely, if she hadn't matriculated in the talent school.

And that new star, Olympe Bradna, now working in "Everybody's Girl," owes her groundwork in film education to her New York Paramount training. Dorothy Lamour is another graduate.

Star University, as the establishment is called, is open to anyone whom Dean Kaplan, the man in charge, believes has the qualifications for a screen career. The tuition is free and so is the screen test.

● By EDWARD DOHERTY from Hollywood ●

Kaplan, who has been discovering talent for the legitimate stage and the screen for the past 20 years, is probably one of show world's outstanding authorities on what it takes to make the brightlight grade.

The old saw—hunting for needles in a haystack—is axiomatic in the profession of new-face finding.

But Kaplan and Paramount are able to point to "needles" found every year from among the great masses. No, it is not easy. Some years as many as 15,000 people apply for entrance, of which only 300 qualify.

When time comes for the journey to Hollywood even this group, more often than not, is whittled down to six or seven persons.

To give the public an idea of what it really takes to register on the screen to-day—that being a pretty girl or a handsome lad counts about 10 per cent. in the examination—Kaplan has prepared 50 questions, covering all phases of his work as a talent expert and talent developer.

He advises aspirants to be honest with themselves and consult their friends for truthful reactions if they, themselves, are doubtful about their relation to some of the queries, particularly those pertaining to personality and ability.

On this page are the questions as propounded by Kaplan.

Recently I talked with Sidney Phillips, chief talent scout for Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. I showed him the list of questions given here and asked him if he thought it exhaustive.

"Yes," he said. "We go out after these qualities.

"The real test of a scout's ability lies in his selection—he's allowed so many wrong guesses, and if they pile up he's not only out of luck but a job as well.

"He needs must find not only acting ability, but also personality—and that's an intangible thing to define.

"No scout sees a performer for the first time and then immediately arranges transportation to Hollywood—it's taken as long as two years to make a so-called discovery.

"I saw a young girl in Greenwich three years ago—the play was bad, the cast worse, but this youngster, even though lacking technical equipment, had color, warmth and an instinct for doing the right thing on the stage.

"She was contacted and watched for over two years.

"Then, and only then, was she ready for a test.

"My advice to screen aspirants, if they believe they have the qualities demanded in these questions, is to get experience on the stage.

"Then, if they can get to America, and if they have the ability, their chances of discovery are reasonably good."

DOROTHY LAMOUR is one of the stars who have been trained at Paramount's film college. The home film test explained here was compiled by Henry Kaplan, head of the college.

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Mary Mocks At Glamor

The Story Behind "the Maguire's" Success

By Barbara Bourchier
from Hollywood

MISGUIDED journalists have applied to Australia's Mary Maguire that worn-out phrase, "glamor girl." But to anyone who knows Mary, or has even seen her, the description is absurd.

There's no doubt Mary is attractive. But her appeal lies in her young, fresh beauty, her healthy, natural manner, her remarkable energy and enthusiasm.

She doesn't pretend to be glamorous for a moment—and if she were to try it her crowd of very frank sisters would soon kid her out of it.

There have been a number of rather ridiculous and frequently highly exaggerated stories printed about her—most of them in her native land, we might add.

So perhaps it's about time for someone who knows her to write the true story of Mary Maguire, or just plain "Maguire," as her disrespectful sisters choose to call her.

Some Australians seem to have been given an impression that the name of Mary Maguire is now a household word in America. This is hardly fair to Mary or anyone else.

Until the release of "Alcatraz" she was scarcely known at all outside Hollywood, and even now her name probably wouldn't mean a great deal to a large majority of the movie going public.

This is only to be expected, seeing her work to date consists of leads in two "B" pictures, a small bit in "Confession," and a lead in "Alcatraz," which started out as a "B" but ended up as the more important "A" variety.

Marion Davies Helps

IN Hollywood, among the movie crowd, her name is well known.

Many of the movie people know her personally, the rest are familiar with her name through almost daily reports of her activities in the gossip columns. These reports she is now endeavoring to curb by steering clear of too many night-club appearances.

Her social connections are really rather remarkable, and have gained her the intense interest of every gossip columnist in town.

It all started soon after Mary acquired her first Warner Bros. contract. Marion Davies—whom she had never met—called her up one day and asked how she'd like to visit San Simeon, the famous ranch of publisher William Randolph Hearst.

Mary said she'd like it very much—and thus with no effort at all crashed the first social gate in the movie city—a gate many fully-fledged stars are still trying, unsuccessfully, to crash.

At San Simeon she met Hearst, played tennis with him, admired the wonders of his ranch, with its private landing field and zoo.

Subsequently she has made several visits to San Simeon, and to Wintoon, Hearst's other big place in northern California.

She has remained friendly with Marion Davies and is always a welcome guest at her huge beach home.

The fact that Hearst took an immediate liking to her was one of the luckiest things that came Mary's way. The most important publisher in America, owner of a huge chain of newspapers and magazines, he was in a position to give her invaluable publicity, and has done so.

Since that first visit to San Simeon, Mary has been welcome in the movie city's highest social circles.

For a while she had the gossips a-dither over a reported romance with Joseph Schenck, one of Hollywood's wealthiest producers. He presented her with a diamond bracelet worth more than three hundred pounds—which she lost in a cafe a couple of weeks later.

In spite of this, Mary tells friends Schenck just "regards me as a kid."

The next romance rumor involved director William Wyler, another of the town's most eligible males. She's still quite chummy with Willie.

Then came Alfred Vanderbilt, jun., scion of one of America's first families, who inherited three million dollars a few years ago, and is heir to the entire vast family fortune.

This last friendship turned Hollywood's more sophisticated belles green with envy, but wasn't particularly serious so far as Mary was concerned.

These belles will probably collapse when news of the Maguire lass' friendship with the multi-millionaire, producer, aviator, Howard Hughes, breaks upon their startled ears . . . as will Hollywood columnists who for months have been linking Hughes' name with that of Katharine Hepburn.

The other day Mary told us she has been seeing Howard for weeks, but that they've avoided the better-known cafes and night clubs—so that the gossips are still ignorant of the friendship.

Hughes discovered the late Jean Harlow, and produced "Hell's Angels," the picture that brought her stardom.

Being young, good looking, far too wealthy, and extremely adventurous, he's the village's most-sought-after male.

His favorite sport is dashing from coast to coast in his plane, breaking speed records. Having broken almost every possible record in America, he's now considering a non-stop flight around the world!

Up at the Maguire home the other afternoon Mary was pondering as to whether she would dare appear with Hughes at a forthcoming premiere and risk raising a storm in the gossip columns.

At this point elder sister Pat meandered in . . . "Well, Barbara, what do you think of her . . . running around with the filthy rich?" she inquired. "Yes," kidded small sister Carmel, "Maguire's in high society now!"

"Maguire" took it cheerfully and sadly admitted she had indeed "gone social."

"Have one of these sweets?" invited Mary, passing a large box, "they're marvellous . . . made in Austria . . . Willie gives them to me . . ." ("Willie" is director Wyler.)

"Everyone's always giving her things," wailed Pat. "Would you believe it . . . one chap wants to give her an aeroplane for her birthday!"

No Swelled Head

THE following day, out at Warners' studio, I had a long talk to Brian Foy, the fellow who "discovered" Mary for Hollywood, and has guided her career since her arrival.

A word about Foy might be suitable here. Around Hollywood he's just known as "Briny," and at the studio they like to call him the "keeper of the Bees." "Briny" is in charge of production of all "B" pictures at Warners.

"John Farrow told me Mary was coming over," "Briny" told us. "He thought we might be able to use her. I brought her out here and gave her a test.

"As far as her future is concerned,'" he continued, "it all depends on how she handles herself and how the breaks come. She's started now and I think, as I did in the beginning, that she has a good chance of hitting the top—given, of course, the right direction, and the right vehicles.

"Of course she needs a lot more acting experience, but that will come easily, because she's very good on the set and takes direction willingly and intelligently, from what her directors have told me. They never seem to have any trouble with her. You know, a lot of these young people get into awful difficulties when they start reading—and believing—what you people and the publicity departments write about them.

"I don't have that trouble with Mary, though. Perhaps it's that grand family of hers—perhaps she's just got more sense than most kids.

"For that matter, it seems to me all these foreign youngsters who come over are often about two years ahead of our American boys and girls — their minds are more mature, they're steadier, they're not so easily affected by the publicity and praise they get.

"Yes, I think Mary will be all right."

Later, Brian Foy told me that Mary has been signed up for three years by Twentieth Century-Fox.

And the president of Twentieth Century-Fox is her friend, Joe Schenck.

So the breaks ought to come soon.

GALLERY OF PLAYERS

Mary Maguire

"Sergeant Murphy" (Warner Bros.) is her latest film

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GRAND OLD MAN of the SCREEN

★ By JOAN McLEOD from Hollywood ★

● *IN "Hurricane" (left), Smith has one of the most sympathetic roles, as a priest who stays by his flock till death. Above: As we saw him in "Little Lord Fauntleroy."*

. . . is C. Aubrey Smith, brilliant actor and best-loved Briton in Hollywood.

THERE was a time when Smith was as good a cricketer as he now is an actor. He once came to Australia with an All-England cricket team.

That was away back in the 'nineties. And the tough old veteran is playing cricket still.

While on a cricket tour of South Africa in 1890, he "died" of typhoid fever.

And on July 21 last he celebrated his 74th birthday by being "drowned" for his final film scene of Samuel Goldwyn's "Hurricane."

"It was in Johannesburg that I 'died'," Smith told me the other day.

"The water supply was contaminated, and almost all of our crowd went down with typhoid.

"I had pneumonia and pleurisy along with it. On a Tuesday my case was given up as hopeless.

"Some way the word got out that I was dead. It was cabled to London, and appeared in the newspapers."

Smith, of course, didn't learn about these details until weeks later when he emerged from the fever coma. By that time the London papers containing accounts of his death had reached Johannesburg.

After his complete recovery, Smith stayed on in Johannesburg for a couple of years, working on the then booming stock exchange.

"I made money—and lost it," he recalls. "I don't imagine I was cut out for business."

Returning to England he made his professional debut as an actor, and has been with stage and screen ever since.

For a man of 74, Smith is little less than a marvel. Rugged and robust, he is the picture of health, and lives up to his looks by playing cricket regularly and working harder than most young actors in Hollywood.

Had motion pictures come into earlier prominence as a medium of entertainment, the sterling British actor undoubtedly would have made his cinema debut in his thirties instead of his late forties.

Years before he ever faced a movie camera he was an internationally renowned actor.

Even so, he is one of the screen's pioneers. His first film work was done in 1915. During the next 15 years he returned to pictures at intervals. It took talking productions finally to woo him away from the stage, however.

Pioneer of Films

TO-DAY, Smith belongs wholly to the cinema, although his love for and loyalty to the stage remain deep and unshaken.

"I'll undoubtedly end my days in Hollywood," he says. "There are two very good reasons. In the first place I am getting splendid opportunities, and keeping very busy.

"I like the work, the climate, the environment, and the thriving cricket competition we have developed here.

"In the second place, my wife probably wouldn't let me live anywhere else. We have found this the ideal spot for a home."

During his years on the screen, Smith has seen the character actor steadily rise from semi-obscurity to a position of dominant importance in the industry.

● *A racehorse-owner in his portrayal in his latest M.-G.-M. film, "Thoroughbreds Don't Cry." Smith's age is 74.*

His own portrayals, those who know their Hollywood will attest, have aided immeasurably in this advancement of the character players' estate.

"In the early days of the films," Smith recalls, "character players were just necessary evils. The lovely heroine had to have a crabbed old father or a scheming uncle.

Memorable Pictures

"THERE must, perforce, be mothers, grandmothers, middle-aged villains, and kindly old men.

"To-day, the character player stands on his own merits, and is given roles of outstanding, sometimes stellar, importance."

Next to his love for the profession to which he has devoted his life is Smith's passion for cricket.

In his youth, the stalwart veteran was a famous athlete. Those who follow the fortunes of the Hollywood Cricket Club, of which he is president and team captain, will tell you that he must have been very good indeed. He is still a crack player to-day and leads his team in action each week against clubs which come from as far away as British Columbia.

Smith's first picture work was done in New York for the Frohman Amusement Corporation. His films of the 1915 era included "Builder of Bridges" and "The Witching Hour."

It was in 1930 that the screen definitely claimed the British actor.

In the more than forty pictures he has made since that date are included such memorable productions as "Trader Horn," "Morning Glory," "Queen Christina," "Blonde Bombshell," "The House of Rothschild," "The Scarlet Empress," "We Live Again," "Bengal Lancer," "Clive of India," "The Crusades," "China Seas," "Little Lord Fauntleroy," "Romeo and Juliet."

While establishing himself as a great character actor, C. Aubrey Smith has done one other thing. He has become the most loved and respected Englishman in Hollywood.

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Here's Hot News From All Studios!

BY JOHN B. DAVIES New York; BARBARA BOURCHIER Hollywood; JUDY BAILEY London.

FILM celebrities often say that they crave to appear in the theatre, because the screen cramps their artistry.

But a lot of them have flopped lately in Broadway shows.

The latest is Fredric March, who appeared with his wife, Florence Eldridge, in "Y'r Obedient Husband." The play lasted only a week and was generally "panned" by the critics. The "New York Times" described it as "an indifferent jest indifferently performed."

Doris Nolan is also back in Hollywood after having failed to set the Great White Way alight in "Tell Me, Pretty Maiden." Following on the comparative flop of Sylvia Sidney in "To Quito and Back" and Constance Cummings in "Madame Bovary," these further storm signals have made the film colony thoroughly frightened of the thunder of the Broadway critics.

* * *

AFTER declaring in public that the only way for them to remain married is to avoid seeing each other, Lupe Velez and Johnny Weissmuller amazed fellow diners at the Trocadero by holding hands and cooing the whole evening long.

Lupe has just returned to Hollywood after an absence of some months in Mexico, where she was busy doing pictures.

Jon Hall, who frequently served as Lupe's escort during her marital vacation, is very friendly these days with Johnny. They lunch together at the Beverly Derby.

IT looks as if Elaine Barrie's dream will finally come true. She may appear on Broadway next season opposite her famous husband, John Barrymore.

John has purchased a play called "My Dear Children," in which a daughter has to cope with a problem parent—Elaine being the daughter, and John the father in the dangerous fifties.

A purposeful young woman is Elaine Barrie. She never relaxes in her efforts to encourage John to finer achievements and to improve herself.

* * *

PARAMOUNT STUDIOS have decided that Martha Raye's elastic mouth may have been over-emphasised in all her pictures. After all, she has legs, too, and they happen to be among the shapeliest in Hollywood.

In "Big Broadcast of 1938" the audience will have a chance to view the comedienne's limbs to advantage.

* *

CLAIRE DODD announces that she is going to be divorced from John Martin Strauss, a successful investment broker, whom she married in 1930. Her interest is centred in Gerard Lambert, jun., a wealthy New York business man.

She flew from Hollywood to New York especially to see him before he sailed for Europe.

* *

IT was a dramatic moment at Gloria Swanson's cocktail party when Mary Pickford met and was introduced to Lady Sylvia, the present Mrs. Fairbanks.

Until this party, Hollywood hostesses had carefully avoided inviting them to the same functions, so that when Mary breezed into the room there was a hush of anticipation. No one knew how the two women would react to each other.

But the guests were disappointed if they expected fireworks. Mary and Sylvia Fairbanks shook hands politely and with apparent cordiality, and chatted in the most casual manner.

They did not betray their awareness of the tension of the room.

* * *

SONJA HENIE'S generosity does a lot towards restoring one's faith in human nature. A jeweller was displaying to Sonja a selection of diamond bracelets.

Sonja picked one that she liked particularly well, but before closing the purchase she called over her wardrobe girl, Marguerite Royce, to ask her opinion.

The girl was so ecstatic in her enthusiasm that Sonja presented the bracelet to her and told the jeweller she was sorry, but she couldn't afford another for herself.

* * *

MARRIAGE to Mary Pickford has had a sobering effect on Buddy Rogers. He says that his screen career as a romantic hero is definitely a thing of the past.

Henceforth he will devote himself solely to his new orchestra. Buddy and his band are now appearing in Chicago.

* * *

HARRY GREGG, a Californian cattleman, has spent his spare time in the last two years sculpturing a likeness of Kay Francis from a 12ft. x 7ft. rock slab. Says she is his favorite movie star.

* * *

HOLLYWOOD'S English is better than the home-made brand—according to one pundit. Authority for the statement is the dowager Lady Swathling, London representative of the English Speaking Union.

Visiting the Warner Bros. studios, Lady Swathling told players that their enunciation and pronunciation was, on the whole, much better than that of the average well-educated Briton.

UNLIKE other professional couples, Francis Lederer and Margo refuse to be parted, no matter how tempting an offer is made them.

Francis has had several offers to go to London and Paris for pictures, but he has turned them all down because Margo can't go with him.

Margo's present plans are to appear in a play this winter in New York, in which case Francis will stay right by her throughout the entire run. After that they will both go abroad to take up Francis' film commitments.

* * *

EDWARD G. ROBINSON walked off the stage where they were filming a pistol-shooting scene of the Damon Runyon comedy, "A Slight Case of Murder," so he would not hear the shots.

He has not liked gunfire since his boyhood in the Balkans. When you see him fire a pistol in one of his gangster roles without flinching . . . that's real acting.

* * *

SO delighted is Sonja Henie over the enthusiastic manner in which the American public has received her, that she is now planning to become an American citizen.

Dots . . . and Dashes

● Sylvia Sidney and George Raft have been seen together so often that people are beginning to wonder. ● Some say that Claudette Colbert has a date with the stork, but her mother, Mrs. Cauchois, says she is ski-ing in Austria. ● The latest twosome is David Niven and Simone Simon. ● Word from the hospital that the heir to Arline Judge and Dan Topping will be christened Daniel Reid Topping the Second. ● Rumors that Paramount's Italian beauty, Isa Miranda, is married to her manager, Alfredo Guarini. ● Douglas Fairbanks, jun., amusing parties with the candid camera film he took of Ginger Rogers on the set of "Having Wonderful Time."

THE LION'S ROAR

(A column of gossip devoted to the finest motion pictures).

Picture-goers know that the *best pictures* of the year are given the honour of that designation because they were the *best entertainments* of the year. No picture earns the right to be called a good picture unless it is good entertainment . . . and that means, unless it *satisfies* the audience. Thus, if a picture lands in any list of "best pictures of the year," you can rest assured that it is an *excellent entertainment* designed expressly to give the audience *more* than full value for its entertainment shilling.

* * * *

So, you see, there is a real significance behind the fact that *Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer* pictures *ALWAYS* are to be found on top in the lists of the year's *best* films.

* * * *

The Film Critics Guild of Australia has voted M-G-M's "*The Good Earth*" as the Best Picture of 1937! The magnitude of this production . . . the acting genius of *Luise Rainer* . . . the *masterful characterisation* by *Paul Muni* . . . the greatness of this *M-G-M* production — all of its factors helped to make it a film you enjoyed thoroughly, and helped it to earn the right to be called —by experts—"*the best picture of 1937.*"

* * * *

Incidentally, the Film Critics Guild of Australia began making its awards for the best picture of the year in 1937, and its first award (Best Picture of 1936) came to *M-G-M's "Romeo and Juliet."*

* * * *

The Guild announced a list of the six best pictures of the year. "*The Good Earth*" was at the top of the list, having won first place by a good margin. However, second place on the list was given to "*Captains Courageous*," and sixth place to "*Marie Walewska*" — both M-G-M pictures!

* * * *

It must mean a lot when *one* company which only releases about 10% of the year's films, wins *fully* 50% of the year's acclaim!

* * * *

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MYRNA LOY is with William Powell in "Double Wedding," M.-G.-M. comedy.

PRIVATE VIEWS

★★ DOUBLE WEDDING

William Powell, Myrna Loy. (Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.)

(Week's Best Release.)

AFTER a somewhat morose period, William Powell has regained his old comical confidence. "Double Wedding" is a very good crazy comedy, and he dominates it.

He is an artist who lives in a car-trailer. He says everybody should live in trailers, because they are the covered waggons of the future.

The film zigzags along an eccentric path, and it goes fast. It mixes wit and horseplay in the correct proportions.

Myrna Loy has a change from gracious wifeliness. Here she is a domineering young lady who tries to protect her younger sister from the Bohemian fascination of Powell, with his trailer and his eyebrows; and inevitably succumbs herself.

Some of the best laughs are raised at Spike's Place, a ramshackle restaurant beside which Powell has parked his trailer.

Apoplectic Edgar Kennedy portrays Spike delightfully. When Powell is wanted on the phone, Spike summons him by firing an air rifle at a gong suspended in the window of the trailer.

John Beal adds something to the fun as the fiance whom Florence Rice rejects because he lacks the quality which she calls "yumph."

This new term "yumph" is a welcome addition to the language if it will take the place of that nightmare word "glamor."

Crazy people on the films, like those in real life, are either funny or pitiful. The pitiful class on the films is growing rapidly.

But the people in "Double Wedding" are emphatically in the other class.—St. James; showing.

★★ NAVY BLUE AND GOLD

James Stewart, Robert Young (Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.)

FILMS about the Annapolis naval college are all made from exactly the same recipe, but this one is cooked more skilfully and served hotter than usual.

Robert Young is the conceited youth who joins the naval college only because, as he puts it, "the uniform is catnip to women."

In the end he is ennobled by the college's fine seafaring traditions, such as playing football and hitting people with brooms.

The other stock character—the earnest youth whose father was in the service—is played by James Stewart with considerable charm. With Florence Rice he puts over well some embarrassed love scenes.

Symbol of all the college's traditions of seamanship is a decrepit officer called "Skinny" Dawes, who totters round the football field instructing the players. Lionel Barrymore does well in the part.

Final proof of the salvation of the "smarty," Robert Young, comes after the navy has beaten the army in the big football game.

It is a hallowed tradition that each of the players is privileged to ring a Japanese bell. But instead of ringing it himself, Young hands the knocker to "Skinny" Dawes.

"Sir," says the old man, simply, "You are Navy."—Capitol; showing.

★THE BRIDE WORE RED

Joan Crawford, Franchot Tone. (Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.)

IN order to thrill the more demented fans, it is a Hollywood custom to "co-star off-screen lovers."

In private life Joan Crawford is Mrs. Franchot Tone. Therefore, when as a screen character she is here required to fall in love with a Tyrolean postman, the postman must be played by Franchot Tone.

This deepite the glaring fact that Mr. Tone no more resembles a Tyrolean postman than he does a Hindu sword-swallower, a Japanese bookmaker, or an Eskimo trombonist.

It is not till the end of the film that Joan Crawford, a blues singer from Central Europe, decides that love in a post office is more attractive than gold-digging in a palace.

Robert Young is the man who invites her to the palace. The amorous cross-currents among the three stars are quite unreal, and move slowly.

They make many noble remarks like, "I haven't seen the sun—I've only seen you."

The red gown which Miss Crawford wears is a repulsive garment, though not as funny as the black cloak she assumes in one scene to show she is pathetic.

Redeeming features of the picture are the photography, especially of mountain scenes, done by George Folsey, Hollywood's best cameraman, who handles all Crawford films.

Also the very good acting of minor characters, notably Billie Burke as a catty Countess, and Lynne Carver as a neglected fiancee.

It was tactless of the producer to place Lynne Carver's fresh beauty in such obvious contrast to Joan Crawford's armory of cosmetics.—State; showing.

★ HOLD 'EM, NAVY

Lew Ayres, Mary Carlisle. (Paramount.)

THE formula used in "Navy Blue and Gold" is also used here, but with less finish and less human interest.

Again we find that football is the chief item in the training of American naval officers. Surely it is time that these naval films provided at least a glimpse of the sea.

Fired by these entertainments, dozens of young Americans are no doubt joining the navy to see the football. But what will they see?

This time Ayres is the "smarty" who is ennobled at Annapolis. At the end he not only becomes "Navy," but becomes engaged to Mary Carlisle, a curved milk-barmaid.—Cameo and Haymarket-Civic; showing.

BLOSSOMS ON BROADWAY

Edward Arnold, Shirley Ross. (Paramount.)

IT is remarkable how tedious a mad comedy can be when it is mad without being comic.

The story here takes all kinds of fantastic turns. A girl dressed as a cowboy suddenly sings from a box at the opera. Two old Jewish gentleman hold irrelevant conversations.

But scarcely for a moment are we goaded into a wan smile.

Edward Arnold, one of the best character actors on the screen, is forced to wander through this astounding display of puerility. We were sorry for him.—Cameo and Haymarket-Civic; showing.

OUR FILM GRADING SYSTEM

★★★ *Three stars—excellent.*

★★ *Two stars—good films.*

★ *One star—average films.*

No stars . . . no good.

Shows Still Running

★★★ **The Life of Emile Zola:** Paul Muni; historical drama. Century, 8th week.

★★★ **Dead End:** Joel McCrea, Sylvia Sidney; New York drama. Plaza, 4th week.

★★★ **Stage Door:** Katharine Hepburn, Ginger Rogers; comedy-drama. Regent, 2nd week.

★★ **Wells Fargo:** Joel McCrea, Frances Dee; historical Western. Prince Edward, 2nd week.

★★ **Under the Red Robe:** Annabella, Conrad Veidt; costume melodrama. Mayfair, 2nd week.

★ **Jericho:** Paul Robeson; African adventure. Lyceum, 2nd week.

★ **Sparkles:** Jessie Matthews; crime comedy. Embassy, 2nd week.

CRAWLED UPSTAIRS LIKE A CRAB

Owing to Rheumatism in Her Knees

It was not a very dignified way of going upstairs, but she had rheumatism in her knees, and it was the best she could do, at the time. Since then, she has been taking Kruschen Salts, and now feels 20 years younger. Read her letter:—

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I'VE JUST *Talked to* STALIN

Continued from Page 3

WE have seen what the last one has done for Europe and the entire world. To provoke another war now would be worse than a crime. Notice that I am talking from the commercial and financial point of view, not alone from the humanitarian one.

"But at the same time no government can afford not to prepare itself for war, not to be ready for war. This is what we are doing in Russia, this is what we will always do."

I ventured to put to the Red leader a question about the army, and the so-called military conspiracy which recently ended with the execution of Marshal Tukachevsky and other generals. But he stopped me with the curt remark, "This is not a subject I care to discuss."

STALIN asked me whether I had found many changes in Moscow, and what I thought of them.

I could only say that the city had been modernised, but that I regretted the disappearance of ancient landmarks to which Moscow had owed so much of its picturesqueness. Such landmarks, for instance, as the chapel of the Iberian Virgin.

"And by the way," I added, "what has become of and where have you put the ancient ikon?"

The Dictator shrugged his massive shoulders in a gesture of complete indifference.

"How can I know what they have done with her?" he said.

And then it was that he offered me tea which was brought already poured in its cups by a soldier in uniform, cups which were well known to me.

They were those used during Court balls in Petrograd and in Moscow, and as I sipped I wondered whether I had ever drunk before out of that same cup.

Lonely Man

I HAVE mentioned the row of bells on Stalin's desk. There is a story circulating in Moscow to the effect that one of these bells, which is called "the death bell," is rung by the Red leader whenever he wants to despatch a visitor before a firing squad.

I hasten to say that I do not believe this story. It is one of many similar fantastic yarns.

It is a generally accepted belief that Stalin has no friends, that he is the loneliest man upon earth. Lonely he is, of that there can be no doubt. But it is the loneliness of a man who is not understood.

The Soviet chief believes in his superiority over those who surround him to an extent I have never met in anyone else, with the possible exception of Bismarck.

But the latter, being an ultra-civilised and cultured man, could keep his ego within bounds. Stalin, though trying constantly to instruct himself, is in reality uncultured.

Stalin has a few friends who are passionately devoted to him, who would give up everything, including life itself, for him.

He was a devoted son to his mother, who died about a year ago. He was a good husband to the young wife he lost tragically, and he is a thoughtful father to her children.

At home or among the small circle of people he frequents, he can be a friendly companion.

Sometimes the Soviet iron-man goes to visit in his small circle of friends. No one knows beforehand, except the person who is to be his host, and his bodyguards.

Stalin's car is always preceded and followed by others, and is surrounded by a mounted escort.

What will Stalin do? It is impossible to talk with him, even for the shortest of times, without feeling that he also might perform great things.

The trouble is that no man can perform great things or great deeds alone, and Stalin is completely alone, knows it, and suffers from it. Suffers as acutely as a not sufficiently civilised nature such as his can suffer.

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Mary Pauline Callender

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Books

When MARY BRYANT, girl convict with the First Fleet, covered 3000 miles in an open boat she performed a feat that matched BLIGH'S historic cruise.

IN 1787 Mary Braund, maid to a lady in Salcombe, took the place of her sweetheart, William Bryant, a smuggler, who was in Winchester Gaol awaiting transportation.

Mary was caught; soon Bryant also was rearrested.

Mary, only nineteen, was sentenced to death, but His Majesty graciously was pleased to extend the Royal mercy and she was transported to Botany Bay on the ship Charlotte. That was in May, 1787.

In another ship of the First Fleet sailed William Bryant, but she did not see him until they reached New Holland, long afterwards, when their child had already been born.

A few days after the child was born on September 8, 1787, she was named Charlotte. By this time Mary knew that W. Bryant was in another ship of the Fleet, but she was unaware whether or not he was her Will.

The kindly John White, surgeon to the Charlotte, confirmed the fact for her and, at the Cape, took steps to have him informed of the birth of his child.

Birth of the Idea

JANUARY came, and Port Jackson, 5021 leagues from the Portsmouth they had left so long before: in fact, eight months and one week previously.

On March 10, 1788, now married, Bryant and Mary set up housekeeping at the point some distance from the main settlement, where Will and a handful of fellow convicts manned a fishing boat and spent their entire time eking out the slender stores of the penal colony with fish.

Men were being hanged for robbing the stores. Will nevertheless sometimes took the risk and stole some of the fish he caught for his wife and baby . . . two babies, eventually, for when Charlotte was three the boy Emmanuel was born.

About the same time was born in Mary's brain the idea of escaping from the ignominy of life in "New Holland."

In December, 1790, the Dutch brig Waakzaamheid, from Batavia, arrived with rice, beef, pork and flour for the starving colony, and Governor Phillip entered into negotiations with Captain Detme Smit for her purchase.

Smit, strolling along the shore in search of fish, made the acquaintance of Mary . . . "Considered himself fortunate to meet this English girl, whose great coils of gold-brown hair and fine limbs appealed to his Dutch eyes."

To Mary he was a visitor from another world. "Where do you say this Batavy is?" she asked.

With visions of a new life in the rich Dutch colonies before her, Mary contemplated first stowing away on the Dutch brig.

The captain, on his next visit, declared his love for her . . . "Will you take me away from this dreadful place?" she cried.

He would . . . but not her babies, and certainly not her husband.

But Mary did not drop the question entirely. She encouraged the amorous captain—just a little.

Then she said: "Could we go in a small boat? Captain Bligh did."

Bligh in the previous year had sailed his small boat containing 18 souls 3000 miles from the Bounty mutiny near the Friendly Isles to Coupang in Dutch Timor, thereby inspiring hope of escape in some adventurous bosoms in New Holland.

Smit admitted the feat was possible—with an experienced navigator.

Morton, a fellow convict, had some navigating experience. He was joined in the conspiracy. The Dutchman provided a rough chart and sailing directions and an antique quadrant, 14 pounds of salted pork and 100 pounds of best Batavia rice.

Jim Martin, handy with adze and chisel, three lifers, Cox, Allen and Lilley, Jim Butcher, and John Simms, who could cook, were approached.

On March 28, the Dutch brig sailed for England, Captain Hunter in command and Smit as master.

The same moonless night Bryant's gang—eleven souls in all—in their six-oared cutter, which they had fitted with mast and sail, crept out of Sydney Heads.

Their stores were 100lbs. flour, 100 lbs. rice, 14lbs. salted meat, 3 stone of dried fish, a few bits and pieces saved by Mary from the house, and 11 gallons of water.

Once in the open sea, Bryant and Morton set a course parallel with the coast but a few miles off, to avoid not only the current, but prying eyes from the beach.

Eighteen hours in the boat and all hands were stiff, sore and weary, the children fractious. Braving the savage "Indians," of whom they went in constant terror, they landed and slept and ate ashore.

Indomitable Woman

THIS practice they repeated night after night. It was on one such occasion that they discovered—the first people to do it—the coal deposits upon which later the fortunes of Newcastle were founded.

Lobsters and fish were plentiful. In three days rest and full stomachs worked wonders; the two children were tanned and bright-eyed. Mary was almost happy.

Back at the penal station their escape had caused consternation. Governor Phillip held out precious little hope for the "desperate adventurers," but he took steps to have the Dutch colonies advised of their escape.

ETHEL BOILEAU, whose latest novel, "Ballade In G. Minor," has, as its name suggests, a background of music and politics.

Meanwhile there was little monotony aboard the cutter.

Bryant's command was not entirely unchallenged. But by using stern measures he kept the recalcitrants in order and the voyage continued.

It was the indomitable Mary who poohpoohed all alarms and urged them always on.

"Eh, Will," cried Morton once, "Thy Mary be a better man than you—nor us!"

After 60 days they sighted Cape York, and turned west. And on their sixty-ninth day they sailed into Coupang, having covered 3254 miles—2000 miles of coral coast, 1200 miles of trackless sea.

The good-natured Dutch Governor, Mynheer Wanjon, believed their tale of shipwreck on the way "to Port Jackson from Ameriky," and for a while they lived in comparative luxury.

But it was a fool's paradise. Wanjon grew suspicious at their lack of any ambition to leave.

Then Captain Edwards suddenly turned up with the survivors of the Pandora, wrecked while bringing back alive the Bounty mutineers.

Edwards was utterly sceptical. Dutch spies got Lilley drunk, and in "his cups" he spilled the whole story.

Chained to the deck, they were carried off by the inhuman Edwards in the Rembang to Batavia.

Bryant and Emmanuel died in Batavia in December, 1791.

The rest were sent to England in the Hoornwey. Cox jumped overboard, Morton died of fever; Simms, too.

Transferred at the Cape to the British ship Gorgon, Mary suffered a happier fate, but her child, Charlotte, died before she reached England.

Aboard the Gorgon was one Captain Stuart, Royal Marines, who had sailed out with her on the Charlotte. Mary, sentenced to be retransported to Botany Bay, lay nine months in Newgate Gaol before the influence of "a gentleman of high rank in the army"—Stuart—brought her a Royal pardon.

"The next day he returned with his carriage and took off the poor woman, who almost expired with excess of gratitude."

"The Strange Case of Mary Bryant." By Geoffrey Rawson. London. Robert Hale, Limited.

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WEAK KIDNEYS

Quick Relief—Lasting Benefit

It will take you only a few minutes to read the following letters telling of kidney trouble, rheumatism, bad back, completely conquered by De Witt's Kidney and Bladder Pills. Here one-time sufferers tell you of the quick relief and lasting benefit these famous pills bring you. Here is proof positive that you, too, can end your down-dragging, strength and vitality-sapping pains at once.

BACKACHE
INSTANTANEOUS BENEFIT

Mr. W. Monaghan, of 2, Raglan Road, Auburn, Sydney, writes:—"For the past two years I have suffered from severe backache and pains in the limbs. After trying many medicines and liniments I was finally recommended to try De Witt's Pills. I received almost instantaneous relief and shall always be grateful to your famous pills."

Pains in Back
ENDED

Mrs. O. Curran, 125 Bellevue Street, Canmeray, N.S.W., writes:—"After suffering for a number of years with agonising pains in the back and joints, a relative persuaded me to try De Witt's Pills. After taking the first few doses I was greatly benefited and soon regained my former energy."

URIC ACID TROUBLE
BANISHED

Mrs. R. Wall, 94, Wells Street, Newtown, Sydney, writes:—"I am 43 years of age and suffered constantly for 10 years with uric acid troubles and pains in the joints. It was not until I took De Witt's Kidney and Bladder Pills that my trouble was completely banished. I am very thankful for this marvellous remedy. My pains have vanished like magic."

RHEUMATISM
& KIDNEY TROUBLE GONE

Mr. G. Coleman, 73, Oxford Street, Lansdowne, Masterton, writes:—"I used to be troubled with rheumatism and kidney trouble, but since taking De Witt's Pills I am a new man. I am 67 and without an ache or pain. I can safely recommend your pills to anyone, for they have done me such a lot of good."

WEAK KIDNEYS
3 DOSES OF De WITT'S—GREAT BENEFIT

Mrs. A. Hargreaves, 170 South Terrace, Fremantle, W.A., says:—"For over 30 years I suffered from weak kidneys and urinary disorders. I tried many remedies but obtained no permanent relief. A friend recommended De Witt's Pills and after three doses I was greatly benefited. I was very grateful and will never be without these pills."

IT IS DANGEROUS TO NEGLECT
KIDNEY TROUBLE

Why will you stay in pain and danger when here is given complete and convincing proof that no matter how long you have suffered, no matter what remedies you have tried without success, here in De Witt's Pills you have a remedy that acts quickly and gives lasting benefit? Many one-time sufferers write years after saying there has never been a return of their old trouble.

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WRITTEN IN THE STARS

ASTROLOGY BY JUNE MARSDEN

President Astrological Research Society

PISCEANS, do not be so trustful! Be a little suspicious to start with and the world will be kinder to you!

STRANGE though it seems, the weaknesses of Pisces-born people (February 19 to March 21), are also frequently their strongest and finest points.

It is the foolishness of the gullible types of Piscean, for instance, which helps to earn for them the great esteem they enjoy for kindliness and generosity, and for their work among the needy or distressed.

Monasteries, convents and the Church are "homes" for many people born under this sign of the zodiac. Many others can be found unselfishly giving their time, their labors and their earnings to charitable institutions.

Many of the most successful evangelists were born at this time of the year—men and women who cheerfully go to far and lonely places, or into unsavory districts rescuing and helping the "down-and-outs" and spreading the word of God.

Such people may not always be very businesslike or "tough," but frequently they are far more beloved than some of their fellow-men who belong to more "worldly-wise" signs of the zodiac.

Successful "Hunches"

OF course, there are other Pisceans whose strong star-map indications help their owners to hide their "soft" elements or to show them only to close associates and the family circle, while presenting a harder and shrewder nature to the business world.

Such people either cultivate a stronger character or else bluff their way through the world on a personality which hides their real nature. When such attributes are properly developed, a Piscean can become exceedingly shrewd, progressive and business-like.

Moreover, the inherent sensitivity and intuition of such people seem to warn them of dangers and provide them with "hunches" which they can follow with surprising success.

Search around among your friends and associates and you will find that Pisceans most often earn renown for uncannily correct guesses, and for giving others advice which seems exceedingly wise.

Of course, it doesn't always do to "ride" this inborn faculty for prescience to a standstill—especially on the racecourse or in chasing lottery prizes. In fact, if so used, it seems to have the habit of bringing only regret and loss in its wake. It is almost as though the gift must be used only for the finer and more unselfish things of life, if it is to prove valuable and reliable.

Most Pisceans are subject to deception and imposition on the part of others, sometimes to such a degree that the sweetness of life is endangered, and the sorrows, disappointments and disillusionments of existence triumph over happiness and success.

As most Pisceans are loving, sensitive, and kindly, such dangers should be avoided as assiduously as possible.

Pisceans, being changeable and impressionable people, somewhat given to dreaming and romancing, and often lacking in aggressiveness and self-confidence, seem to get themselves into trouble with an earnestness and an innocence which is both laughable and lamentable.

They are inclined to trust too much. This may be a nice attitude towards the world and its rogues, but it is a rather foolish one.

They will find that they can help others (and themselves) much more fully by exercising a little suspicion (and wisdom) first of all, and a little trust (and hope) afterwards.

In short, people of this sign should cease vacillating and taking the "easy road" in life, and determine instead to become strong-minded, cautious, forceful and self-confident. They should look down at those feet of which they are usually so proud—feet which are generally small, well-shaped, or beautifully shod—and determine to stand on their own toes both "mentally" and physically.

If all these rules are followed, Pisceans will find that their sorrows and regrets will be halved, and their joys and successes doubled.

The Daily Diary

TRY to utilise this information in your daily affairs. It will prove interesting.

ARIES (March 21 to April 21): Poor on March 17 and 18. Fair on March 21 (evening) and 22.

TAURUS (April 21 to May 22): Quite fair for you to begin small projects on March 15 and 16.

GEMINI (May 22 to June 22): Let patience predominate. It will help you to hurdle the difficulties which can arise by unwise action on March 15, 16, 21 (after dusk) and 22. Be very cautious then and thus avoid delays or setbacks.

CANCER (June 22 to July 23): Good results can follow hard work expended on matters started on March 19, 20 and before dusk on March 21. Go after the things you want. Finalise outstanding projects. Be optimistic.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 24): An unspectacular week. Routine best.

VIRGO (Aug. 24 to Sept. 23): Rather poor for you on March 21 (after sunset) and 22. Live quietly and make no changes then.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 24): March 17 and 18 just fair.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24 to Nov. 23): March 19, 20 and 21 should bring you either opportunities or the realisation of past wishes. Work hard, start new ventures and make contemplated changes. Do not waste these days.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 23 to Dec. 22): Don't let your left hand know what your right hand is doing on March 15, 16, 21 (after 4 p.m.) or 22. Losses, upsets, difficulties, and opposition likely. Take no risks.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 20): Quite fair for you on March 21 (after sunset) and 22, but be less venturesome on March 17 and 18.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 19): Unspectacular. Routine work best this week.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March. 21): "Mixed" conditions for you this week, but mostly good if you watch your step. Play safe on March 15 and 16 in order to avoid losses and disappointments then. But work hard on March 19, 20 and 21 (to dusk). Opportunities or pleasing conditions likely then.

[The Australian Women's Weekly presents this series of articles on astrology as a matter of interest, without accepting responsibility for the statements contained in them.—Editor, A.W.W.]

Really Lovely To Look At

RED LIPS, CLEAR SKIN AND EYES

"My skin was always blotchy and sallow," states Miss J.D., of Scottsdale, Tasmania. "It was due to poor blood because I have been anaemic for the last year. I would get up in the mornings faint and giddy, and my legs and arms would ache practically all day. I was utterly miserable with violent headaches and lack of energy.

"My Aunt advised me to take Dr. Williams' Pink Pills, and after three bottles of these pills the results have been really marvellous. My skin is clear of pimples and I have a good colour. I have gained weight and can go for long walks without getting aches and pains in legs and back. The headaches and indigestion have gone."

To be really lovely to look at and to enjoy womanly fitness you must have plenty of rich red blood flowing throughout your system. Dr. Williams' Pink Pills always help to create this good new blood, which will give you a lovely complexion, red lips, sparkling eyes, abundant energy, and fulness of beauty.

If you are anaemic, pimply, headachy, thin, lack energy and high spirits, get back your attraction and fitness by taking Dr. Williams' Pink Pills now. At chemists and stores, 3/- bottle.***

MUSSOLINI dominates even the fashions in Italy. These two girls have the letter "M" of Il Duce's signature (left) worked on the dress, and (right) worn as a wooden brooch.

Beauty Specialist's Grey Hair Secret

Tells How to Make Simple Remedy to Darken Grey Hair at Home.

Sister Hope, a popular beauty specialist of Sydney, recently gave out this advice about grey hair:—"Anyone can easily prepare a simple mixture at home, at very little cost, to darken grey, streaked or faded hair and make it soft, lustrous and free of dandruff. Mix the following yourself to save unnecessary expense:—To a half-pint of water, add 1 ounce of Bay Rum, a small box of Orlex Compound and ½ ounce of Glycerine. These can be obtained at any chemist's. Apply to the hair a couple of times a week until the desired shade results. Years of age should fall from the appearance of any grey haired person using this preparation. It does not discolour the scalp, is not sticky or greasy, and does not rub off.

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Even tiny blemishes spoil skin beauty. What is your skin like, under the powder and cream? If it isn't perfectly clear, smooth and fine, start using Rexona Soap this very day. The specially medicated Rexona lather is a whole beauty treatment in itself. It cleanses *below the surface*, sweeps dust and germs from *deep* down in the pores where skin faults start. Use Rexona twice daily to clear your skin and keep it radiant.

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Acids in Stomach Cause Indigestion

Create Sourness, Gas and Pain. How to Treat.

Medical authorities state that nearly nine-tenths of the cases of stomach trouble, indigestion, sourness, burning, gas, bloating, nausea, etc., are due to excess of hydrochloric acid in the stomach. The delicate stomach lining is irritated, digestion is delayed and food sours, causing the disagreeable symptoms which every stomach sufferer knows so well.

Artificial digestants are not needed in such cases and may do real harm. Try laying aside all digestive aids and instead get from your nearest chemist or store some Salix Magnesia and take a teaspoonful in water right after eating. This sweetens the stomach, prevents the formation of excess acid and there is no sourness, gas or pain. Salix Magnesia (in powder or tablet form) is harmless, inexpensive, and is a fine remedy for acid stomach. It is used by thousands of people who enjoy their meals with no fear of indigestion.

"YES." Alma wondered why she had mentioned the thing she had been trying for six years to forget. "He was killed in a drunken brawl down at the saw-mill. Is the bandage too tight?"

"Just right." Rusty's voice held a note of pity. "I feel better already. Thanks ever so much."

Alma gathered up her first-aid kit swiftly.

"Keep off that foot for a few days, and give it a chance," she advised. "I'll get Joe to bring your meals to you. If you want anything, just ring."

She left hurriedly, almost brusquely, before he had a chance to reply.

Rusty wasn't a good patient.

He refused to stay off his bad foot; insisted on coming downstairs every day, and limping into the little dining-room for his meals. Between meals he sat in the office and talked to Alma.

She enjoyed having him there, of course. The days were long, and there were very few guests at that time of year. Rusty, when in the mood, could talk for hours of interesting things he had done and seen and heard in the wilds.

He hadn't been born a bushman, Alma gathered. At various times he had worked in a circus, joined the crew of a sailing ship, prospected for gold in the desert, helped to build a railroad in Mexico, and in general roamed the world. He had come north to try his hand at trapping.

He talked very little of his unfortunate marital experience. Alma had to piece out the story from casual, often bitter, fragments. He had met the girl, Marie, in a little bush town like Triple Falls, a couple of hundred miles away. He had taken up free-trading and the first season it hadn't been so bad. The second year he had come back from a trip to find Marie gone. She hadn't even left the usual note. The flu had taken Marie and the man she had run off with a year or two later. A sordid, unbeautiful story.

"But you still like this country?" Alma asked him one day. "I should think you'd hate it; it hasn't been very kind to you."

"I've seen quite a bit of the world, but no country has ever really interested me before. They say the bush gets into a man's blood the first winter, and they're right. I couldn't leave now if I wanted to—and I don't want to." He paused for just a second. "Now, less than ever," he added slowly. Alma looked away, out through the clear spot in the window which faced the street.

Alma knew what Rusty meant, and she knew that it must not be. Still, now was not the time to tell him.

"How does the foot feel to-day?" she countered.

"Fine. Too well. In a couple of days I won't have the least excuse for staying any longer."

"This is an hotel, not a hospital," Alma reminded him, smiling faintly.

NO PLACE *for a* WOMAN

"It's both—or has been to me. And something else besides."

"What?"

"Home," Rusty said firmly. "A room with curtains at the windows. Meals served on linen, with silverware and crystal. And——"

"Linen?" laughed Alma. "You mean cotton. And as for the silverware and what you are kind enough to call crystal, I'm afraid you've not been in civilised parts for a long time, and have lost your sense of values."

"That's my story, and I stick to it," Rusty said doggedly. "But there's something else, a whole lot more important—you."

THERE it was. Alma had known it was coming, and she had thought about what she would say for hours on end—and still, now that the words were out and she must make reply, she did not know what to say.

"Me?" she repeated, coloring. "Now you're being silly!"

Rusty leaned forward quickly, and captured one of Alma's hands before she could draw it away.

"Is it silly to you?" he asked gravely, commanding her, with his eyes, to meet his steady gaze. "Is it, Alma?"

"No." She drew her hand from his grasp, slowly. "I didn't mean that."

"Then what did you mean?"

"That we should know better, you and I."

"I can't see why."

"I think you can; I think you do. I've taken root; you haven't. Your idea of a roof is a tarpaulin strung between two trees alongside the trail."

"A man gets tired of all that," Rusty said slowly. But his eyes did not meet hers.

"Have you tired of it?"

"I think I have. Knowing you, living here in a room your hands have decorated . . . you've spoiled me for the trail, Alma. I've grown soft."

"In three weeks?" She laughed, softly, but there was no laughter in her heart. There was an ache there, and a crying desire to believe him.

Rusty gathered both her hands in his, and held them firmly, possessively.

"You'll see," he nodded. He seemed suddenly to have made up his mind. "Do you—could you learn to care for a reformed bush-rat, do you think?"

Alma met his eyes without hesitation.

"I've already learned, Rusty. That's why I'm afraid. That's why I wish—oh, why did you have to come here at all?"

He was trembling as he drew her close, and his voice was far from steady.

"Because it was my lucky day, dear. Because we both have earned the right to be happy, I think. And we are going to be happy, Alma; please believe that."

And Alma, there in his arms, unleashing her pent emotions and gaily dethroning reason, believed it, every word.

"JUST here," said Rusty, "I thought I'd build the house. Won't we have a grand view, down this little cove, and out across the lake?"

"Lovely," nodded Alma. Somehow, it didn't seem real, even now that axes were ringing, felling the trees for their home. Her home, and Rusty's. "It's the prettiest spot on the lake. I've often come here, in the summer, just to watch the sunlight on the water, and listen to the wind in those big pines."

"You told me that once; that's why I bought it," Rusty said fondly. "We'll have the logs cut by the end of the week, and then we'll soon get ahead with the building. Have you decided on the things you want?"

"Not yet, dear."

"Remember it's a long way to Winnipeg, and the tackle will take some time to get back here," Rusty warned.

"I know." It didn't seem real. Alma had kept putting off the actual ordering, because it didn't seem possible they'd ever really need the things she had marked in the big store catalogue; that there'd ever really be a house which would be their home. "But don't worry, I'll spend money fast enough when the time comes!"

Rusty laughed happily, and slipped an arm round her shoulders. It was rather an awkward proceeding, on snow-shoes, but he managed it.

"I hope so, Alma. Then I'll know

Continued from Page 5

what I've been storing my money for all these years. And don't forget all the things you've wanted for the Northern Prince; we're going to make that the outstanding hotel of the bush country. Men will come from far and near——"

"Silly! There are only twenty rooms."

"We'll build an addition, then," Rusty said confidently. "Which reminds me: are you sure a lean-to kitchen will be sufficient? I'm a heavy eater, you know!"

"If you keep on increasing the size of the place, we'll have a couple of hotels instead of one. You must remember that two people don't occupy so very much space, after all."

"Two answers to that," said Rusty promptly. "First, this is going to be the first real home I've ever had, and I want it to be a good one. Second, it might not be just a matter of two people, always." His arm tightened lovingly about her shoulders. "Right?"

Alma stared out across the lake, with its pressure-ridges and wind-carved drifts, feeling the warm color mounting to her face. Rusty saw her flush, and chuckled.

"Right?" he repeated gently.

"You build the home as you wish, dear," Alma said. "But, oh, let's not plan too much too far ahead. It seems, somehow, we're tempting fate. Anyway, we must go back now; the instant one leaves the hotel, someone is sure to arrive, and poor old Joe never gets things right."

She led the way out of the clearing, leaving behind them the thudding of axes. A tree crashed to the ground with a brittle breaking of frosty branches as they started back.

"See?" said Alma triumphantly, as they came in sight of the Northern Prince. "I never knew it to fail."

There was a string of dogs in front of the hotel; a weary string, lying in the snow between slack traces, panting. The lead dog was unusually heavy for the position and had a white mark like a capital C across his shoulders.

"I think I know that string of dogs," commented Rusty. "If I'm right, they belong to Clancy Dyer. He's a 'Mountie.'"

THE dogs did belong to Clancy Dyer. When Alma and Rusty entered, they found the policeman, his fur hood thrown across the counter as a tribute to the warmth of the glowing stove, leaning back in a chair.

The front legs of the chair hit the floor with a bang as he recognised Rusty.

"Well, I'm hanged!" he hailed Rusty, sticking out a freckled brown paw. He was a big chap, filling the scarlet tunic until the brass buttons strained at their fastenings. "Where have you been?"

"Places. How's the protector of the weak, the upholder of the law's majesty and His Majesty's law in the far places, to say nothing of the tourists' delight?"

"Still able to digest his beans." The two men shook hands, laughing like a couple of boys. Alma stood somewhat apart, feeling suddenly alone. There was no place for her in this picture. Something cold and constricting settled about her heart.

"That's too bad," chuckled Rusty. He glanced at Alma. "This is Clancy Dyer, Alma; one of the invincible Mounted. Clancy, this is the bravest woman in the Province; she's very shortly to become Mrs. Rusty Clarke!"

Alma caught the look of surprise which flashed up in the policeman's eyes as he took her proffered hand.

"I know it's not quite the thing to congratulate a bride, or a prospective one," he said with smiling sincerity, "but I'd like to say that Rusty's all there. He'll do to take along anywhere. And—I see his luck is still holding."

"Thank you."

Clancy grinned and pulled a folded, greasy paper from his pocket.

"Rusty," he said, "you've been up through the Fisher River country, haven't you? North of the Big Island, I mean?"

"Rather, and it's tough going. Why?"

Clancy unfolded the paper, a map, on the counter.

"Look here. Does this look right to you? They've never run a survey up that far, and I don't trust this map. Too much white space on it, and too many dotted lines."

The two men bent over the map.

"It isn't even pretty good," Rusty snorted impatiently after a moment's inspection. "Why, it doesn't even show the fork where the . . . wait a second." He snatched the pen from the inkstand and leaned over the map again. "Let's see, now. . . ."

FOR a quarter of an hour or more Rusty muttered and fussed over the map. "There's a creek coming in about here, and here are two little lakes . . . and there should be a rapids marked just north of this big double bend—no, not there, here. This map's no good at all, Clancy. Worse than none. I can't get my bearings from it. What's the idea, anyway? Heading up that way?"

Clancy nodded, frowning at the map.

"I'm after a fellow who murdered his squaw; man by the name of Gridley. Perhaps you know him?"

"Gridley? Yes! Big surly chap with shaggy eyebrows; walks with his shoulders hunched forward and his arms dangling. Nose banged up."

"That's a better description than I've got," said Clancy. "He's hiding up in his camp, according to my information, and I'm to bring him in. Know where his camp is?"

"Sure. I've bought fur from him. Look here, you go down the Fisher to where it makes a big swing to the east; then take the first—no, the second creek coming in from the east and follow it until it forks. Take the northern fork, and——"

"Show me on the map."

Rusty glowered at the big square of paper.

"That's not a map," he said. "It's worse than nothing. Now, you just watch for a big bend to the east, and then follow the second creek——"

Please turn to Page 38

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"OH!" The hand left Judith's wrist and gripped the bannister-rail. "He is in Brussels? Yes, yes, he is still in Brussels. Tell me, confound you, tell me!"

There was a white agony in her face, but Judith was unmoved by it. She said: "He is not in Brussels, nor will he return. I wish you good night, Lady Barbara."

She passed on down the stairs to where Worth stood waiting for her. Their carriage was at the door; in another minute they had entered it, and were being driven out of the gates in the direction of the centre of the town.

Judith leaned back in her corner, trying to compose her agitated spirits. Worth took her hand presently, and held it lightly in his own. "What is it, my dear?"

"That woman!" she said in a low voice. "Barbara Childe. She dared to ask me where Charles had gone. I could have struck her in the face for her effrontery. She let Charles go like that—unhappy, all his old gaiety quite vanished!" She found that tears were running down her face, and broke off to wipe them away. "Don't let us speak of it! I am tired and stupid. I shall be better directly."

He was silent, but continued to hold her hand. After a minute or two she said in a calmer tone: "That noise! It seems to thud in my brain. What is it?"

"The drums beating to war," he replied. "The Reserve is being put into motion at once."

She shuddered. As the carriage drew nearer to the park, the coachman was obliged to curb his horses to a walk, and sometimes to bring them to a complete standstill.

In the great Place Royale a scene of indescribable confusion reigned. The sky was already paling towards dawn, and in the ghostly grey light men, horses, waggons, gun-carriages seemed to be inextricably mixed.

AN INFAMOUS ARMY

Continued from Page 6

WAGGONS were being loaded and commissariat trains harnessed. The air was full of a medley of noises; the stamp of hoofs on the cobbles, the rumble of wheels, the jingle of harness, the sudden neigh of a horse and the indistinguishable clatter of many voices. An officer called sharply; someone was whistling a popular air; a mounted man rode past; a color waved. Soldiers were sitting on the pavement, some sleeping on packs of straw, others checking the contents of their knapsacks.

Judith, who had been leaning forward in the carriage, intent upon the scene, turned suddenly towards Worth. "Let us get out!"

"Do you care to? You are not too tired?"

"No. I want to see."

He opened the door and stepped down on to the cobbles and turned to give his hand to her. She stood beside him while he spoke with the coachman, and then took his arm. They made their way slowly across the Place. No one paid any heed to them; occasionally a soldier brushed past them, or they had to draw aside to allow a waggon to go by, or to pick their way through a tangle of ropes, canteens, corn-sacks, billhooks, nosebags, and all the paraphernalia of an army on the move.

They reached the further side of the Place at length, and stood for some time watching order grow out of the confusion. Regiments were forming one after the other, and marching down the Rue de Namur towards the Namur Gate.

The steady tramp of boots made an undercurrent of sound audible through the shrill blare of the trumpets and the ceaseless beat of the drums. Some of the men sang; some whistled; the Riflemen began to form up and a voice from their ranks shouted: "The first in the field and the last out of it: the bloody, Fighting Ninety-fifth!"

A roar went up; hundreds of voices chanted the slogan. Indifferent-eyed Flemish women, driving market carts full of vegetables into Brussels from the neighboring country-side, stared incuriously; an order rang out; another regiment moved forward.

Once Worth bent over Judith, asking: "Are you not tired? Shall we go home?"

She shook her head.

At four o'clock the sun was shining. In the Park the pipes were playing "Hieland Laddie." The sound of them drew nearer, the tread of feet grew to a rhythmic thunder. The Highland Brigade came marching through the Place in the first rays of the sunlight, pipe-majors strutting ahead, huge fur head-dresses nodding, and kilts swinging.

"Were they some of these men who danced for us to-night?" Judith asked, recognising a tartan.

"Yes."

She was silent, watching them pass through the Place, and out of sight. When the music of the pipes was faint in the distance, she said with a sigh: "Let us go home now, Julian. I shall remember this night as long as I live, I think."

BY eight o'clock in the morning the last of the regiments had marched out of Brussels. A little later the Duke followed, accompanied by his staff, and a profound silence descended on the city. Judith had fallen asleep some hours before, with the sound of the trumpets and the tread of many feet in her ears. When she awoke the morning was considerably advanced.

She dressed, and went down to the salon on the first floor. Worth had gone out, but he came in presently with the newspapers. It was being reported in the cafés that the Duke had ridden out in high spirits, saying that Blucher would most likely have settled the business himself by that time, and that he would probably be back in Brussels for dinner.

The general opinion seemed to be that no action would be fought that day. It was thought that the bulk of the British troops could not be brought up in time. Judith did not know whether to be glad or sorry. The suspense would be as hard to bear as the sound of cannon, she thought.

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NO PLACE *for a* WOMAN

Continued from Page 36

"THE Fisher takes half a dozen big swings to the east, probably," interrupted Clancy. "Listen, Rusty, this is important—murder. Outside of Gridley himself, and maybe a couple of others, nobody knows that country as you do. That's why I came here. I heard you were here, and I knew you'd be glad to give me a lift."

Rusty hesitated, looking out of the window. Whatever it was that had settled about Alma's heart grew colder, tightened.

"Well . . ." he said. "Murdered his squaw, eh? That's bad."

"It's murder," Clancy said grimly. "That's always bad, Rusty."

"That's dirty country; tough going all the way. I suppose I really ought to . . . What do you think, Alma? I leave the decision to you."

"Why, I think you should go, Rusty."

She hoped he would protest; that he would look at her and read her heart, and say, "You don't think any such thing, and you're right. This is a policeman's business, not mine. I have a home to build—our home. I told you I was through with the trail, and I am." She prayed that he would say these things—but instead he smiled in sudden relief, and turned proudly to Clancy.

"Isn't she a wonder?" he said. "There isn't a woman like her in the world!"

Alma walked away—away from the range of their voices as they made their quick, eager plans.

Not a woman like her in the world, Rusty had said. She hoped not.

She would hate to think that any other woman bore the burden about her heart which seemed to Alma almost more than she could stand.

They were leaving the next morning at daybreak, Rusty told her later.

"Be back in two or three weeks," he said. "The men should have the logs cut for the house before that. And while I'm gone, be sure to order the things from Winnipeg, so——"

"No," said Alma quietly, "and you might as well tell the men not to bother about the logs."

He stared at her with hurt, astonished eyes.

"Alma! What do you mean?"

Alma looked away. It would be impossible to meet his eyes and tell him what she must tell him now.

"I mean—I've changed my mind. I'm not going to marry you."

"But why? It isn't because I'm making this little trip, dearest? That's my duty, and Clancy's been my friend ever since I've been up here. And you said yourself I should go."

"You should," Alma told him tonelessly.

"Then what makes you talk like this?" cried Rusty.

"I'VE changed my mind," Alma repeated. "Isn't that enough?"

"I want to know why."

"If I—if I tell you, will you go away?"

"I—yes, if that's what you wish, dear."

"Then listen. We were a pair of fools to believe we were different people just because we—we were in love. I couldn't love your life, nor you mine. As soon as the first temptation came along—oh, don't you see, Rusty?"

"No. You said yourself I should go. I'll be back in three weeks—perhaps two. And then——"

"And then something else would happen, and something else after that—to take you away, or make you want to go. You and I have both had things happen to us in the past; neither of us can afford to make another big mistake.

"So—I'm letting you go, Rusty. Letting the bush have you. That's all there is to say." She hurried away, to her own quarters, and bolted the door.

Presently there was a knock on her door, but she did not answer. After a while, Rusty tapped again; and when she still did not answer he went away, his footsteps slow and miserable.

In the morning she came down to watch them leave. It was early, even for a town like Triple Falls, and the single street was deserted save for the three of them and the two eager teams of dogs.

Pleadingly, while Clancy looked the other way, Rusty held out his arms to her.

"I'll be back," he whispered. "Please dear. . . ."

"No," Alma said softly. "Not now. I mean it, Rusty. Later—oh, some time when you're very sure all trails are lonely and long, and you hate the tarpaulin over your head." She kissed him quickly and backed away.

Rusty hesitated an instant, watching her. "Perhaps youre right," he murmured. "It's in my blood. But some day . . ." Quickly, then, he unloosed the coils of his whip. The lash cracked like a pistol within an inch of his lead dog's ear.

"Nick! Mush along, boy! Hola!"

Alma stood there, watching the moving teams, the two men kneeling on the tails of the toboggans, their faces to the north.

It hurt, but she knew she had made no mistake. This way, they would always have each other. She would be with him on his far-reaching trails, not staying him, not binding him to a roof-tree he could learn to hate.

And he would be with her always, with her willingly, happily, feeling no call which would mar their lives together.

And some day—she had told him of that day; the day when his beloved bush and its trails would pall upon him with their loneliness and their silence, and the shelter of his tarpaulin would seem insecure and insufficient—he would come back.

At the edge of the lake, Rusty turned and waved, standing on the end of the moving toboggan, his whole figure silhouetted dimly against the grey sky.

Alma waved in return, and went back into the hotel.

The long lonely trails claimed Rusty, but in the background of his life was Alma, waiting patiently.

It was very quiet there, and the room was filled with shadows which the lamp on the desk only softened.

She opened the door of the stove and looked inside. The fire was almost out, but there were a few coals there.

It would not be hard to kindle them into a blaze again.

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Growing Deaf with Head Noises? Try This

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AN INFAMOUS ARMY

"QUITE a number of people are leaving for Antwerp," Worth observed. "Lady Fitzroy has gone, and I met De Lancey just before he went off to join the army, who told me that he had prevailed upon that poor young wife of his to go, too." He paused, but she made no comment. He smiled. "Well, Judith?"

"You would not wish to go if I were not here."

"Very true, but that can hardly be said to have a bearing on the case."

They were interrupted by the butler's coming into the room with the announcement that Lady Barbara Childe was below, and wished to speak to the Earl.

Judith was astounded. She had not thought that after their encounter the previous night Lady Barbara would dare to accost her again, let alone call at her residence. She looked at Worth, but he merely raised his eyebrows, and said: "Well, I am at home, and perfectly ready to receive visitors. I don't understand why they are left in the hall. Beg her ladyship to come up."

"Yes, my lord," said the butler, his bosom swelling at the reproof. "I should have done so in the first place, but that her ladyship desired me to carry the message."

He withdrew, stately and outraged. The door had scarcely shut behind him when Judith's feelings got the better of her. She exclaimed: "I wish you had sent her about her business! I do not see why I should be obliged to receive her in my house. And that you should be willing to do so gives me a very poor opinion of your loyalty to Charles!"

"I cannot think that Charles would thank me for turning Lady Barbara away from my door," he replied.

There was no time for more; the butler opened the door, and announced Barbara; and she came into the room with her long, mannish stride.

Judith rose, but before she had time to speak she was forestalled.

"I didn't mean to force myself into your presence," Barbara said. "I am sorry. My business is with your husband." She paused, and a wintry, rueful smile flashed across her face. "Oh, the devil! My curst tongue again! Don't look so stiff; I have not come to wreck your marriage." This was said with a good deal of bitterness. She forced herself to speak more lightly and added, looking in her clear way at Worth: "I couldn't, could I? You at least have never succumbed to my famous charms."

"No, never," he replied imperturbably. "Will you not sit down?"

"No. I do not mean to stay above a minute. The case is that I am in the devil of a quandary over my horses. Would you be so obliging as to house them for me in your stables? There is the pair I drive in my phaeton, and my mare as well."

"Willingly," he said. "But—forgive me—why?"

"My brother and his wife are leaving Brussels this morning. They are gone by this time, I daresay. The house in the Rue Ducale is given up. My own groom is not to be trusted alone, and I do not care to stable the horses at the hotel. They tell me there is already such a demand for horses to carry people to Antwerp that by nightfall it will be a case of stealing what can't be hired."

"LORD and Lady Vidal gone!" Judith exclaimed, surprised into breaking her silence.

"Oh, yes!" Barbara replied indifferently. "Gussie has been in one of her confounded takings ever since the news was brought in last night, and Vidal is very little better."

"But you do not mean to remain here alone, surely?"

"Why not?"

"It is not fit!"

"Ah, you doubt the propriety of it. I don't care for that." Her mouth quivered, but she controlled it. Judith noticed that she had twisted the end of her scarf tightly between her fingers, and was gripping it so hard that her gloves seemed in danger of splitting. "Both my brothers are engaged in this war," she said. "And Charles."

"I had not supposed that Charles' fate was any longer a concern of yours," Judith said.

"I am aware of that. But it is my concern, nevertheless." She stared at Judith with haunted eyes. "Perhaps I may never see him again. But if he comes back I shall be here."

She drew a sobbing breath, and continued in a hard voice: "That, however, is my affair. Lord Worth, you are very obliging. My groom shall bring the horses round during the course of the day. Good-bye!" She held out her hand, but drew it back, flushing a little. "Oh——! You would rather not shake hands with me, I daresay!"

"I have not the least objection to shaking hands with you," he replied. "But I should be grateful to you if you could contrive to stop being foolish. Now sit down and try to believe that your differences with my brother leave me supremely indifferent."

She smiled faintly, and after a brief hesitation sat down in the chair by the table. "Well, what now?" she asked.

"Are you staying with friends? May I have your direction?"

"I am at the Hotel de Belle Vue."

"Indeed! Alone?"

"Yes, alone, if you discount my maid."

"It will not do," he said. "If you mean to remain in Brussels you must stay here."

She looked at him rather blankly. "You must be mad!"

"I am quite sane, I assure you. It can never be thought desirable for a young and unprotected female to be staying in a public hotel. In a foreign capital, and in such unsettled times as these, it would be the height of folly."

She gave a short laugh. "My dear man, you forget that I am not an inexperienced miss just out of the schoolroom! I am a widow, and if it comes to folly, why, I make a practice of behaving foolishly!"

"Just so, but that is no reason why you should not mend your ways."

SHE got up. "This is to no purpose. It is unthinkable that I should stay in your house. You are extremely kind, but——"

"Not at all," he interrupted. "I am merely protecting myself from the very just anger I am persuaded my brother would feel were he to find you putting up at an hotel when he returns to Brussels."

She said unsteadily: "Please——! We will not speak of Charles. You don't wish me to make a fool of myself, I imagine."

He did not answer; he was looking at Judith. She was obliged to recognise the propriety of his invitation. She did not like it, but breeding and common sense compelled her to say: "My husband is right. I will have a room prepared at once, Lady Barbara. I hope you will not find it very disagreeable; we shall do our best to make your stay comfortable."

"Thank you. It is not I who would find such a visit disagreeable. You dislike me cordially; I do not blame you. I dislike myself."

Judith colored, and replied in a cool voice: "I have not always done so. There have been times when I have liked you very well."

"You hated me for what I did to Charles."

"Yes."

"Oh, if I could undo—if I could have it back, all this past month! It is useless! I behaved like the devil I am. That wretched quarrel! The very knowledge that I was in the wrong drove me to worse conduct! I have never been answerable to anyone for my misdeeds: there is a fiendish quality in me that revolts at the veriest hint of—but how should you understand? It is not worthy of being understood!"

She covered her face with her hands. Worth walked across the room to the door, and went out.

Judith said in a kinder voice: "I do understand in part. I was not always so docile as you think me. But Charles! There is such a sweetness of temper, such nobility of mind——"

"Stop!" Barbara cried fiercely. "Do

Continued from Page 38

you think I don't know it? I knew it when he first came up to me, and I looked into his eyes, and loved him. I knew myself to be unworthy! The only thing I did that I am not ashamed of now was to try not to let him persuade me into becoming engaged to him. That impulse was the noblest I have ever felt. But he would not believe me when I told him what I was like. Though I knew I should not, I yielded. I wanted him, and all my life I have taken what I wanted, without thought or compunction!" She gave a wild laugh. "You despise me, but you should also pity me, for I have enough heart to wish I had more."

"I DO pity you," Judith said, considerably moved.

"Meanwhile, I do earnestly beg of you to remain with us!"

"Thank you. I will do so, and try not to disgrace you. You won't be plagued with me too much, I hope. I shall be busy. Indeed, I ought not to be here now. I have promised to go to Madame de Ribaucourt's. She has made herself responsible for the preparations for the wounded, and needs help."

"Oh, that is the very thing!" Judith cried. "To be able to be of use! Stay till I fetch my bonnet and gloves! I would like of all things to go along with you."

A few minutes later they left the house together, and set out on foot for their destination.

At the Comtesse de Ribaucourt's all was bustle and business. Many of Judith's friends were there, scraping lint, and preparing cherry-water.

Please turn to Page 42

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RETAIN THE Stevens Government AND PROSPERITY

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What Women Are Doing

Executive Officer

WITH her recent appointment as secretary of the Scottish section of the Co-operative Union of Scotland, Miss Jessie Macqueen, of Glasgow, becomes chief executive officer of the Co-operative Union of Scotland, whose wholesale trade exceeds £60,000,000 annually. Her duties include statistical and propaganda work, and negotiations with trade unions.

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In a Short While They Were Spinning

CLASSES for spinning and weaving have proved popular with pupils at the Church of England Grammar School for Girls, Moss Vale, New South Wales. Miss Doreen L'Estrange, resident mistress of arts and dressmaking at the school, told The Australian Women's Weekly that since the classes were formed about two years ago the girls have taken a great interest in them.

Miss L'Estrange —Norton Trevaks.

In a very short while they were spinning and dyeing the wool for themselves and then weaving it into attractive bags and scarfs. One girl brought wool from her station home, spun and dyed it and wove it into a purse. Miss L'Estrange, who is the daughter of Mrs. W. M. L'Estrange, of Brisbane, studied art at the Brisbane Technical College, under the direction of Mr. Lewis Harvey. Her greatest recreation is riding. She keeps her pony in the school grounds.

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S.A. Association Publishes Book on Mothercraft

IN the publication of "The Australian Mothercraft Book," the South Australian Mothers and Babies' Association has made a definite attempt to help mothers, not only in its own State, but right throughout Australia. Compiled for the Association by an editorial committee of three well-known Adelaide women doctors, Drs. Helen Mayo, Marie Brown and Constance Finlayson, the book contains almost 200 pages of useful scientific knowledge and is written in a simple style that makes it easily understood by the lay mind.

Dr. Helen Mayo, who was one of the founders of the association, and is now its chief honorary medical officer, is responsible for the introduction to the book to which fifteen leading specialists have contributed.

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They Have Always Been Splendid Guiders

THERE was a great rally of Guide Commissioners and Guiders in Melbourne recently when the State Commissioner presented awards on behalf of the Imperial headquarters to three Guiders, Misses F. V. Barfus, Edith Purnell, and Sheila Cameron.

Miss Barfus —Dickinson-Monteath.

All three have been working for Guiding since its early days, and have watched it grow into an established and accepted part of public life in Victoria.

Miss F. V. Barfus was awarded the Special Service Badge, the Beaver, for splendid service to the movement ever since her enrolment in 1920. She became a Guide and Ranger captain, and since 1934 has worked on the headquarters' staff as training secretary.

Miss Edith Purnell, who was Commissioner for Camping from 1920 to 1927, and vice-chairman for several years of the executive committee, and Miss Sheila Cameron, Commissioner for the Rangers from 1928 to 1933, and also a member of the executive committee, were both presented with the Medal of Merit.

Children's Theatre

NEARLY 200 eager children attended the inaugural performance of Sydney's first open-air theatre for children, held recently at Phillip Park, East Sydney. The performance was organised by the founder and secretary of the Children's Library Movement, Mrs. M. Matheson, and her sister, Miss Elsie Rivett. They believe that Sydney is the first city in Australia to have a public open-air children's theatre.

Members of Sydney's Little Theatre circles contributed to the programme, and Madame Pao, wife of the Chinese Consul-General, lent costumes for the Chinese play presented. It is hoped that before long the children themselves will be taking parts. Dramatic classes are being arranged for them.

She Nurses and Teaches Aborigines

A NEW ZEALANDER, Miss Claudia Fraser, who has been working with the United Aborigines' Mission in New South Wales for a number of years, accepted an appointment with the mission at Nepabunna, South Australia.

Miss Fraser's new position includes both nursing—she is a doubly certificated nurse—and teaching among the aborigines at the mission station. Handicrafts, such as tanning and the making of leather goods, are part of the curriculum for the natives, who all live within an area of 20 square miles.

Immediately before going up to Nepabunna, Miss Fraser spent several months in a tour of New Zealand, where she gave lectures and informal talks on the work of the mission.

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Impressed by Americans' Use of Kelp

WHEN delegates from the many Radiant Health Clubs in Australia meet for their annual conference at Cowes, Victoria, at Easter, one of the chief speakers will be Miss Lurline Mayor, of Adelaide. Miss Mayor returned at the beginning of this year after four months' intensive study in America with Mrs. Phoebe Holmes, the founder of the International Radiant Health Clubs, and is keen to pass on all her new ideas to her fellow-workers.

Miss Mayor

While in America Miss Mayor visited numerous factories, cafeterias and health food stores. The extent to which kelp is used as a foodstuff and the variety and amount of fruit juices that Americans drink every day were two of the outstanding facts she observed. Miss Mayor has been physical instructress of the Radiant Health Club in Adelaide for the last three years, and is also actively connected with the Hackney Free Kindergarten.

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Eisteddfod Adjudicator Holds Many Diplomas

TO adjudicate the elocution at the Kurilya Eisteddfod, Miss Diana Reeve, of Sydney, will visit Brisbane in July. Before coming from England to Australia to establish the People's Theatre, in association with Miss Grace Stafford, of Sydney, Miss Reeve had an interesting and successful career in London.

During her schooldays at Bournemouth she won many prizes for art and languages. Later she took a dramatic and teachers' course at the Albert Hall, where she obtained her London University diploma in dramatic art, a teacher's diploma, the school diploma with honors in all subjects, the honors diploma of the Institute of Mimic, recitation prizes, and the production prize.

She then studied at the St. Thomas' Hospital Speech Clinic, finishing up with a visit to Stratford-on-Avon for the Shakespeare season, where she studied stage-managing and "walk-ins."

Her first play, with the Eureka Stockade as the theme, is now in rehearsal. Before starting on her dramatic career, Miss Reeve used to break-in horses, which, she says, is quite a recognised pastime in England.

Here There Is A Welcome

WYREEPI (Maori for "Here there is a Welcome") Girls' Club, Gordon, N.S.W., is planning to celebrate its first birthday in a month or two. The club was formed by Mrs. H. Rinder-Brown to provide a meeting place for domestic workers and their friends, and for lonely girls to make new friends.

Membership fee is 6d a week, and there are already 39 members. The clubroom is open till 10.30 p.m. every day, and the girls can cook meals, do their sewing, and listen to the wireless or gramophone. The club also has a small library.

Talks on various subjects—travel and history included—competition nights and recipe nights are arranged, swimming picnics organised, and a tennis club is planned. On regular Saturday nights there are socials to which the girls can bring their men friends.

The girls' employers take a great interest in the club, and have provided funds and furnishings from time to time. The girls never talk "shop," but are considering study and debates on the domestic problem.

The club believes it is the only one of its kind in Australia, and the president, Miss Kathleen Mehaffy, and secretary, Miss Bessie Freeborn, would be glad to give any information to other domestic workers who want to form similar clubs.

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Domestic Economy College Staff Appointments

TWO new teachers, Miss L. Campbell and Miss N. Arbuckle, have joined the staff of the Emily McPherson College of Domestic Economy, Melbourne.

Miss Campbell holds the diploma of household science of the Dunedin University, and has had wide experience of trade cooking in New Zealand and Chicago. Miss Arbuckle comes from Sale Technical School, Victoria.

After being abroad last year, Miss J. Marriage and Miss B. Thompson have returned to their work at the college.

Miss Marriage gained the Paris diploma for dressecutting while overseas, and Miss Thompson was on exchange duty at Cardiff, Wales.

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To Specialise in Nursery School Work

MISS EILEEN THOMAS, who has been director of the Keith Sheridan Free Kindergarten, Adelaide, for eleven years, has resigned her position to take a special course in nursery school training. With four other kindergarten directors, from Brisbane, she will study in Melbourne under the direction of Miss Christine Heinig, the nursery school specialist who came out from America in May of last year. The course is a twelve months' one, and consists of lectures and practical work in the nursery schools in Melbourne.

Miss Thomas —Falk.

Later Miss Thomas hopes to return to Adelaide to help with the development of the nursery school work there. During the greater part of her time at the Keith Sheridan Kindergarten, Miss Thomas has had five student teachers and 60 children in her charge.

Almoners Appointed to W.A. and Tasmania

MISS AUDREY FINK, of Melbourne, has gone to West Australia to take up her new appointment as assistant almoner at the Perth General Hospital. A daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Roland Fink, Melbourne, she was educated at St. Catherine's, Toorak, and obtained her diploma in social science from the Institute of Almoners and the Board of Social Studies. This is her first appointment.

Miss Gwen Waters, a former trainee of the Victorian Institute of Almoners, who has been almoner to the South Australian Society for Crippled Children for some time, has been appointed to organise similar work for the Tasmanian Society for Crippled Children.

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Mary Won the Coronation Scholarship for Victoria

SEVENTEEN-YEAR-OLD Mary Huntley Pethrick is the first winner of the Coronation Scholarship for Victoria. Arranged by the Returned Sailors and Soldiers' League of Australia to commemorate the accession of George VI, the scholarship was offered in each State to the children of men and women eligible for membership in the league, and is tenable at the University of each State for four years at £30 yearly.

Daughter of the minister of the Presbyterian Church, Horsham, Victoria, and a student of Horsham High School, Miss Pethrick was selected from 110 candidates. She intends to take a science course at the University, and later will do research in bacteriology.

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Former Student Now Vice-Principal of College

LEAVING for England this month is Miss Vera Jennings, vice-principal and tutor at Janet Clarke Hall, Trinity College, Melbourne.

A brilliant student of the University of Melbourne, Miss Jennings several times won the English Exhibition, as well as many other prizes.

A senior student at Janet Clarke Hall when it was known as Trinity College Hostel, she was also president of the Social Club, and after taking her degree in Arts remained on as a tutor. With the exception of a year at Oxford doing further work in English, she has been at the college ever since.

Last year, while the present principal of Janet Clarke Hall was abroad, Miss Jennings was acting principal.

To Attend Peace Conference in Sydney

MRS. E. S. Levinson, whose social welfare work has made her name prominent practically throughout Australia, has been appointed as South Australian delegate to the Women's Conference for Peace, to be held in Sydney early in April. Mrs. Levinson will take with her the results of the discussions on the subject assigned to South Australia by the Women's Commission at the Melbourne conference of the International Peace Campaign, and also a large amount of data collected on the subject.

South Australia was assigned to investigate the "reduction and limitation of armaments by international agreement and the abolition of profit from the manufacture of arms," and each week a group of Adelaide women has met to discuss this question.

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Queensland Player for Australian Women's Hockey

MISS JEAN HYDE, of Brisbane, who is at present in charge of the art department at the Technical College, Toowoomba, has been chosen as the sole Queensland representative for the Australian women's hockey team to meet the American players in Sydney in April. Miss Hyde commenced playing hockey at the Warwick High School, and later, when at the University of Queensland, she figured in many interstate games. Last year she played against the British women's hockey team in Brisbane, and in 1936 for combined Varsities against the New South Wales State team, thus earning an Australian blue.

Miss Hyde —Noel Maitland.

A member of the National Parks Association of Queensland, Miss Hyde is a keen mountaineer, and has climbed practically every worthwhile mountain in South Queensland, including the highest, Mt. Superbus.

She has found time to be interested in the Girl Guides, too, and is one of the few first-class Guiders of Queensland. Before going to Toowoomba she was Patrol Leader, Lieutenant and Captain of St. John's Company in Brisbane. She is qualified to test for first-class.

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INSIST ON FLY-TOX IT KILLS ALL INSECTS

THE feeling of being able to do something which would be of use in this crisis did much to relieve the oppression of everyone's spirits. Dr. Brugmana, the Inspector-General of Health, came in at noon for a few minutes, and told of the tents to be erected at the Namur and Louvain Gates for the accommodation of the wounded. Various equipments were needed for them, in particular blankets and pillows. Judith willingly undertook the responsibility of procuring all that could be had from her numerous acquaintances in the town, and lost no time in setting out on a house to house visitation.

The hours sped by; she was astonished on returning to Madame Ribaucourt's to find that it was already three o'clock; she was conscious neither of fatigue nor of hunger. She sat down at a table to transcribe the list of equipments she had cajoled from her friends, but was arrested in the middle of this task by a sound that made her look up quickly, her pen held in mid-air.

All conversation was stopped short: every head was raised. The sound was heard again, a dull rumble far away in the distance.

Someone said in an urgent voice: "Listen!" Lady Barbara walked over to the window, and stood there, her head a little bent, as though to hear more plainly.

The sound was repeated. "It's the guns!" said Georgiana Lennox, dropping the lint she was holding.

"No, no, it's only thunder! Everyone says there can be no action until to-morrow!"

"It is the guns," said Barbara. She came away from the window, and quite coolly resumed her work of scraping lint.

When Judith and Barbara reached home at five o'clock the cannonading was still audible. Everyone they met was asking the same questions: were the Allied troops separately engaged? Had they joined the Prussians? Where was the action being fought? Could the cavalry have reached the spot? Could the outlying divisions have come up? There could be no answer to such questions; none, in fact, was expected.

Worth was at home when the ladies came in. He had seen Barbara's trunks brought round from the Hotel de Belle Vue, and had installed her frightened maid in the house.

Some time after dinner, when the two ladies were seated alone in the salon, Worth having gone out to see whether any news had been received from the Army, a knock sounded on the front door, and in a few minutes they were astonished by the butler's announcing Colonel Canning.

Only one visitor could have been more welcome. Judith almost sprang out of her chair, and started forward to meet him. "Colonel Canning! Oh, how glad I am to see you"

He shook her warmly by the hand.

AN INFAMOUS ARMY

Continued from Page 39

"I have only dropped in for a few moments to tell you that Charles was well when I saw him last. I have been on a mission to the French King at Alost, and am on my way back now to Quatre Bras."

"Quatre Bras! Is that where the action is being fought? Oh, stay just for a few minutes! We have been without news the whole day, and the suspense is dreadful. Sit down: I will ring for the tea-tray to be brought in immediately. But have you dined?"

"Yes, yes, thank you! I dined at Greathed's, in the Park. Seeing me pass by his house, he very kindly called to me to come up and join him. Crevey was there, too. I can't tell you much, you know. I was sent off just before 5.0, so I don't know how it has been going. However, by the time I left, the Brunswickers and the Nassau contingent had arrived, and Van Merlen's Light Cavalry besides, so you may be sure everything is doing famously."

Barbara said, with a smile: "Confound you, Colonel, you begin at the end! Let us have the start, if you please!"

"By heavens!" he said seriously, "we have had an escape! You won't blab it about the town, but the fact is Boney took us by surprise, and if Ney had pushed on last night, or even this morning, there's no saying what might not have happened. Prince Bernhard had only a battalion of Nassauers, and one horse battery at Quatre Bras." He gave a chuckle. "We can guess why Ney didn't, of course. The French know the trick the Duke has of concealing the better part of his troops from sight. No doubt Ney was afraid he'd come up against the whole Army, and dared not risk an attack without more infantry. But Heaven knows why he delayed so long to-day! They say the French weren't even under arms at ten o'clock this morning. We arrived at half-past to find Orange there with two of his divisions, and nothing of a force in front of him. Charles arrived from Ath a little while after —still in his ball-dress! He had no time to waste changing it last night, so there he is, in all his splendor. However, he is not the only one. Where was I?"

"You had arrived at Quatre Bras to find no very startling force opposing you."

"Oh, yes! Well, so it was. The Duke inspected the position, saw that Ney was making no move, and rode over with Gordon and Muffling to confer with old Blucher, at Ligny."

"We have not joined the Prussians then?"

"Oh, Lord, no! They're seven miles to the east of us, and pretty badly placed, too. I don't know how it has gone with them; they've been engaged all day against Boney himself, but we've had no news. It appears that General Bourmont deserted to Blucher with all his staff yesterday morning, but the old man would have nothing to do with him! I haven't heard of any other desertions."

He paused, for the tea-tray was just then brought in. Judith handed him a cup, and he gulped some of the tea down. "Thank you." He glanced at the clock on the mantelpiece, swallowed the rest of his tea, and jumped up. "I must get back. You'll be hearing more news, I daresay; someone is sure to be sent in. Good-bye—don't be alarmed! All's well, you know."

He hurried away, and not long after he had gone the noise of the firing, which had sounded closer in the stillness of the evening, grew more desultory, and by ten o'clock had ceased. Worth came in, saying that the population of Brussels was still wandering about the ramparts and the Park. Great anxiety was being felt on all sides to know the result of the action. No news had as yet come in; some stout-hearted persons were maintaining that the Allies must have held their ground; others, in a state of growing uneasiness, were preparing to remove instantly to Antwerp.

They remained for some time discussing the news, but the clock striking midnight soon recalled them to a sense of the lateness of the hour. All sound of firing had died away at ten o'clock; nothing had been heard of since; and they could not but believe that if a defeat had been suffered news of it must have reached them. Judith and Barbara went up to their rooms, but they had scarcely begun to undress when the noise of heavy carriages rumbling over the cobbles reached their ears. Nothing could be seen from the windows but people running out of doors to find out what was going on. Shouts and cries seemed to come from all parts of the town; and Judith, pausing only to fling a wrap round her shoulders, hurried to find Worth. He had not yet come upstairs, and called to her from the ground-floor to do nothing until he had discovered what was happening. He went out; Barbara joined Judith in the salon, and they sat in a state of apprehension that made it impossible for either to utter anything but a few occasional, disjointed sentences.

By the time Worth returned, the household was quiet, and Barbara had gone back into the salon with Judith, who had temporarily forgotten her own fears in amusement at her guest's ruthless methods.

WORTH brought reassuring tidings. The noise they had heard had been caused by a long train of artillery, passing through the town on its way to the battlefield. The panic had arisen from a false notion having got about that the train was in retreat. People had rushed out of their houses in every stage of undress; a rumor that the French were coming had spread like wildfire; and the greatest confusion reigned until it became evident, even to the most foolish in the crowd, that the Artillery was moving not away from the field of action, but towards it.

"Is that all!" exclaimed Barbara. "Well, if there is no immediate need for us to become heroines we may as well go to bed. I, at any rate, shall do so."

"Oh," said Judith, with a little show of playfulness, "you need not think that I shall be behind you in sang-froid: you have put me quite on my mettle!"

Good-nights were exchanged; both ladies retired to their rooms, each with a much better opinion of the other than she had had at the beginning of what, in retrospect, seemed to have been the longest day of her life.

The night was disturbed. Many of the Brixellois seemed to be afraid to go to bed, and spent the hours sitting in their houses with ears on the prick, ready to run out into the streets at the smallest alarm. Just before dawn a melancholy cortege entered the town, bearing the Duke of Brunswick's body. Numbers of spectators saw it pass through the streets. The sable uniforms of the Black Brunswickers, the grim skull and crossbones device upon their caps, and the grief in their faces, awed the thin crowds into silence. A feeling of dismay was created; when the sad procession had passed, people dispersed slowly, some to wander about in an aimless fashion till daylight, others returning to their houses to lie down fully clothed upon their beds, or to drop uneasily asleep in chairs.

Please turn to Page 44

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AN INFAMOUS ARMY

Continued from Page 42

BETWEEN five and six in the morning, after an interval of quiet, commotion broke out again. A troop of Belgian cavalry, entering by the Namur Gate, galloped through the town in the wildest disorder, overturning market-carts, thundering over the cobbles, their smart green uniforms white with dust, and their horses foaming. They had all the appearances of men hotly pursued, and scarcely drew rein in their race through the town to the Ninove Gate. All was panic; they were shouting: "Les Francais sont ici!" and the words were immediately taken up by the terrified crowds who saw them pass. The French were said to be only a few miles outside the town, the Allied Army in full retreat before them. Distracted Belgians ran to collect their more precious belongings, and then wandered about, carrying the oddest collection of goods, not knowing where to go, or what to do.

Many of the English visitors behaved little better. Some of those who, on the night of the 15th, had stoutly declared their intention of remaining in Brussels, now ordered their carriages, or, if they possessed none, hurried about the town trying to engage horses, or to procure passages on the canal track-boats. For the most part, however, the flight of a troop of Belgic cavalry did not rouse much feeling of alarm in British hearts. Ladies busied themselves, as they had done the previous day, with preparations for the wounded, and if there were some who thought the cessation of all gun-fire ominous, there were others who considered it to be a sure sign that all must be well.

Judith and Barbara again went to the Comtesse de Ribaucourt's. On entering the house Judith encountered Georgiana Lennox, who came up to her with a white face and trembling lips, trying to speak calmly on some matter of a consignment of blankets. She was scarcely able to control her voice, and broke off to say: "Forgive me, this is foolish! Only it is so dreadful—I don't seem able to stop crying."

Judith took her hand, saying with a good deal of concern: "Oh, my poor child! Your brothers——?"

"Oh, no, no!" Georgiana replied quickly. "But Hay has been killed." She made a strong effort to control herself. "He was almost like one of my brothers. It is stupid—I know he would not care for that, but I can't get it out of my head how cross I was with him for being so glad to be going into action." She tried to smile. "I scolded him. I wouldn't dance with him any more, and then I never saw him again. He went away so excited, and now he's been killed, and I didn't even say good-bye to him."

Judith could only press her hand. Georgiana said rather tightly: "I can't believe he's dead, you know. He said: 'Georgy! We're going to war! Was there ever anything so splendid?' And I was cross."

"Dearest Georgy, you mustn't think of that."

"Oh, no! I know I'm being silly. Only I wish I had not scolded him." She brushed her hand across her eyes.

Judith pressed Georgiana's hand again, and released it, turning away to hide the sudden rush of tears to her own eyes.

She and Barbara returned home a little after noon, to find that Worth had just come back from visiting Sir Charles Stuart. He was able to tell them that an Aide-de-Camp had ridden in during the morning, having left the field at 4.0 a.m. He reported that after a very sanguinary battle the Allied Army had remained in possession of the ground. Towards the close of the action the cavalry had come up, having been delayed by mistaken orders. It had not been engaged on the 16th, but would certainly be in the thick of it to-day, if the French attack were renewed, as the Duke was confident it would be.

The ladies had hardly taken off their hats when the sound of cheering reached the house; they ran out to the end of the street, where a crowd had collected, and were in time to see a number of French prisoners being marched under guard towards the barracks of Petit Chateau.

But the heartening effect of this sight was not of long duration. The next news that reached Brussels was that the Prussians had been defeated at Ligny, and were in full retreat. The intelligence brought a fresh feeling of dismay, which was made the more profound by the arrival, a little later, of the first waggon-loads of wounded. In a short time the streets were full of the most pitiable sights.

Judith and Barbara were amongst the first to engage in relief work. Neither had ever come into anything but the most remote contact with the results of war; Judith was turned sick by the sight of blood congealed over ugly contusions, of the scraps of gold lace embedded in gaping wounds, of dusty rags twisted round shattered joints, and of grey, pain-racked faces lying upturned upon the pavement at her feet. There was so little that could be accomplished by inexpert hands; the patient gratitude for a few sips of water of men whose injuries were beyond her power to alleviate brought the tears to her eyes. She brushed them away, spoke soothing words to a boy crumpled on the steps of a house, and sobbing drily, with his head against the railings; bound fresh linen round a case-shot wound; spent all the Hungary Water she owned in reviving men who had covered the weary miles from Quatre Bras only to fall exhausted in the gutters of Brussels.

Occasionally she caught sight of Barbara, her flowered muslin dusty round the hem with brushing the cobbles, and a red stain on her skirt where an injured head had lain in her lap.

Nothing could have exceeded the humanity of the citizens. There was hardly a house in the town whose doors were not thrown open to the wounded, whether Dutch, or Belgian, German, Scotch, or English. The Belgian doctors were working in their shirt-sleeves with the sweat dripping off their bodies; children, who stared with uncomprehending, vaguely shocked eyes, were bidden by their brisk, shrill mothers to hold umbrellas over men huddled groaning on the pavement under the scorching sun.

In one short hour Judith felt her senses to have become numb; the nausea that she had first felt had left her; in the urgent need to give help there was no time for personal shrinking. A Belgian doctor, kneeling beside an infantryman on a truss of straw on the road, had called to her to aid him; he had told her to hold a man's leg while he dug out a musket-ball from his knee, and roughly bound up the wound. He spoke to her brusquely, and she obeyed him without flinching. A few minutes later she was herself slitting up a coat-sleeve, and binding lint round a flesh-wound that ordinarily would have turned her sick.

At about half-past two, when the news came from the Namur and Louvain Gates that the promised tents were at last ready for the wounded, the sky became suddenly overcast. The relief from the sun's glare was felt by everyone, but in a few minutes the fear of a storm was making it necessary to get all who could be moved under the shelter. The blackness overhead was presently shot through with a fork of lightning; almost simultaneously the thunder crashed across the sky, rolling and reverberating in an ominous rumble that died away only an instant before a second flash and a second clap broke out. By three o'clock the lightning seemed continuous, and the thunder so deafening that the fear of the elements overcame in nearly every breast the lesser fear of a French advance.

BARBARA, helping a man with a shattered ankle to hop up the steps into a house already containing two wounded Belgians, felt her shoulder touched, and looked round to find Worth behind her. He was drenched, and dishevelled; he said curtly: "I'll take him. Go home now."

"Your wife?" she said, her voice husky with fatigue.

"I've sent her home. You have done enough. Go back now."

She nodded, for she was indeed so exhausted that her head felt light, and it was an effort to move her limbs. Worth slipped his arm round the young Scot she had been supporting, and she clung to the railings for a moment to get her breath.

When she reached home she found that Judith had arrived a few moments before her, and had already gone up to strip off her wet and soiled garments. She came out of her bedroom in a wrapper as Barbara reached the top of the stairs. "Barbara?" she said. "Thank Heaven you have come in! Oh, how wet you are! I'll send my woman to you immediately! Yours is in hysterics."

A weary smile touched Barbara's lips. "The confounded wench hasn't ceased having hysterics since the guns were first heard. Is there any news?"

"I don't think so. I've had no time to ask. But don't stand there in those wet clothes!"

"Indecent, aren't they?" said Barbara, with the ghost of a chuckle.

"Shocking, but I'm thinking of the cold you will take. I've ordered coffee to be sent up to the salon. Do hurry!"

Twenty minutes later they confronted one another across a table laid out with cakes and coffee. Judith lifted the silver pot, and found that her hand, which had been so steady, was shaking. She managed to pour out the coffee, and handed the cup to Barbara, saying: "I'm sorry. I've spilled a little in the saucer. You must be very hungry; eat one of those cakes."

Barbara took one, raised it to her mouth, and then put it down. "I don't think I can," she said in rather a strained voice. "I beg your pardon, but I feel quite sick. Or faint—I'm not sure which."

Judith jumped up. "No, no, you are not going to faint, and if you are sick, I'll never forgive you! Wait, I'll get my smelling-salts directly!" She stopped, and said: "No, I forgot. I gave them to that boy whose ear had been shot off. He—Oh, Heaven, Bab, don't, don't!" With the tears pouring down her own face she flung her arms round Barbara, who had broken into a fit of gasping sobs.

They clung together for a few moments, their torn nerves finding relief in this burst of weeping. But presently each made an effort towards self-control; the sobs were resolutely swallowed, and two noses defiantly blown.

"The devil!" Barbara said faintly. "Where's that coffee?"

They smiled mistily at each other. "We're tired," said Judith. "Crying like a couple of vaporish idiots!"

Her teeth chattered on the rim of her cup, but she gulped down a little of the coffee, and felt better. Outside, the thunder still crashed and rumbled, and the rain streamed down the window-panes. The butler had lit the candles in the room, and presently, seeing how the flashes of lightning made Judith wince, Barbara got up, and drew the blinds together.

"The troops in this awful storm!" Judith said. "Will the rain never stop?"

"I wonder where they are?"

"The report this morning said that a renewal of the attack was expected."

"I am not afraid. We remained masters of the field last night, and now all the Army is concentrated there."

"Very true; we may hear of a victory at any moment now, I dare-say."

They relapsed into silence. The sound of carriage-wheels in the street below roused them. The carriage drew up apparently at the house, and while Judith and Barbara were still looking at each other with a sudden question in their eyes, a double knock fell on the front door. Judith found that she was trembling, and saw that Barbara was gripping the arms of her chair with clenched fingers. Neither seemed capable of moving; each was paper-white, staring at the other. But in another minute the butler had opened the door, and announced Miss Devenish and Mr. Fisher.

Please turn to Page 45

When Love and I Went Walking Out

When love and I went walking out
Across the fields and round about,
He turned his face in reverie
And never was a friend to me.
But friend and I went out one day,
We laughed and romped and lost our way.
And when we came to say good-bye,
Poor lonely love was standing by.
Now Friend, and love, and I are three,
Who dwell in joyous harmony!

—Yvonne Webb.

"Yes, Dear, it's Different Now!"

"There was a time, not so long ago either, when I should have hated to go to the country to live.

"Conditions in the town were very primitive then. In most cases there was no water supply and the towns had dreadful, unhealthy sanitary systems. There was no electricity in the homes—think of it!—the children were taught in awful buildings and could not go beyond the primary standard, and the hospitals were obsolete.

"But it's all altered now, and you will simply love living there. Why, you'll have all the comforts of the city, my dear, and lots of wonderful things besides.

"You see, the country people got sick of asking for things, so they decided to form their own political party and get them for themselves ... And did they do it? You'll see for yourself.

"And we'll help them to get more of the good things too, when we get there. They've delivered the goods alright, those boys, as part of the Stevens-Bruxner Government. So we'll be like the other sensible people; we'll know whom to thank and we'll certainly

VOTE COUNTRY PARTY

(Authorised by E. J. Munro, General Secretary, United Country Party, Bridge St., Sydney.)

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AN INFAMOUS ARMY

JUDITH got up with a shudder of relief, and turned to receive these unexpected guests. Miss Devenish, who was muffled in a long cloak, ran forward, and caught both her friend's arms in a tight clasp. "Oh, have you news?" she panted. "I could bear it no longer! All yesterday and to-day in this terrible uncertainty! I thought you might have heard something, that Colonel Audley might have been here!"

Barbara's hands unclenched. She rose, and walked over to the window under pretext of rearranging the blinds.

"No. We have not seen Charles since he left the ball." Judith replied. "Colonel Canning was in last night, and told us then that up till five o'clock Charles was alive and unhurt. We have had no later tidings."

At that moment Worth came into the room. He had changed into dry clothes, and said in answer to Judith's surprised exclamation that he had come in while Mr. Fisher and Miss Devenish were sitting with her. The next question was inevitable: "Is there any news?"

"Yes, there is news," he replied. "It is disquieting, but I believe it may be accounted for by the Prussian defeat. The Allied Army is said to be retreating."

Judith gazed at him in horror. Barbara said: "The devil it is! Confound you, I don't believe it!"

"It is a pity your sanguine temperament is not shared by others," he said drily. "The whole town is in an uproar. I am informed on credible authority that as much as a hundred napoleons have been offered for a pair of horses to go to Antwerp." He flicked open his snuff-box, and added in a languid tone: "My opinion of the human race has never been high, but the antics that are being performed at this moment exceed every expectation of folly with which I had previously indulged my fancy."

"I hope you observe that we at least are preserving our dignity!" retorted Barbara.

"I do, and I am extremely grateful to you."

"But, Worth! A retreat!" Judith cried.

"Don't disturb yourself, my love. Recollect that Wellington is a master in retreat. If the Prussians have fallen back, we must be obliged to do the same to maintain our communications with them. Until we hear that the retreat is a rout, I must—regretfully, of course—decline to join the rabble on the road to Antwerp."

Judith could not help laughing, but said with a good deal of spirit: "Nothing, indeed, could be more odious. We certainly shall not talk of flight yet awhile."

They dined at an early hour, but although both ladies were very tired from the exertions and the nervous stress they had undergone, neither could think of retiring to bed until further news had been received from the Army. They sat in the salon, trying to occupy themselves with ordinary sewing-tasks, until Worth, with a glance at the clock, got up, saying that he would walk round to Stuart's to discover if anything more had been heard. He left the room, and went downstairs to the hall. At the same moment, the ladies heard a knock on the street door, followed an instant later by the confused murmur of voices in the hall.

JUDITH ran out to the head of the stairs. Worth called up to her: "It is Charles, Judith. All is well!"

"Oh, bring him up! Bring him up!" she begged. "Charles, I am so thankful! Come up at once!"

"I'm in no fit state to enter your drawing-room, you know," Colonel Audley replied in a tired but cheerful voice.

"Good Heavens! What does that signify?" She caught sight of him as she spoke, and exclaimed: "You are drenched to the skin! You must change your clothes immediately, or heaven knows what will become of you!"

He mounted the stairs, and as he came into the light cast by a sconce of candles Judith saw that his face was grey with fatigue, and his embroidered ball-dress, which he still wore, saturated with rain and mud, a tear in one sleeve, and the wristband of his shirt stained with blood.

"You are hurt!" she said quickly.

"No, I assure you I am not. Nothing but a cut from a bayonet; it scarcely broke the skin. I am only weary, and very hungry, upon my honor!"

"You shall have dinner the instant you are out of those wet clothes," she promised, taking his hand between both hers, and clasping it for a moment.

"You are worn out! Oh, dear, Charles, the relief of knowing you to be safe!"

She could say no more; he smiled, but seemed to have no energy to waste in answering her. Worth took him by the arm, and led him towards the second pair of stairs. "Come along!" he said. "The appearance you present is quite appalling, believe me!"

Judith ran back into the salon and tugged at the bell-pull. Barbara was standing just inside the door, watching Colonel Audley as he mounted the stairs to his bedroom. She said with a shaky laugh: "His beautiful ball-dress quite ruined! When I think how smart he was, only two nights ago, it makes me want to weep! Was there ever anything so confoundedly silly?"

UPSTAIRS, Worth rang the bell for his valet, and began to help the Colonel peel off his sodden coat. Through the torn sleeve of a shirt that was clinging to his body could be seen a strip of sticking-plaster, covering a slash upon the upper arm. The blood had dried upon the shirt-sleeve, and Audley winced a little as he stripped the shirt off.

"I take it that's not serious?" said Worth.

"Good Heavens, no! A scratch."

"How did you come by it?"

"Trying to rally those Dutch-Belgians!" replied the Colonel bitterly. He added, with the flash of a smile: "I don't blame them, though, poor devils! They got the brunt of it at the start, and then, to add to their troubles, what must some of our fellows do but mistake a party of them for the French, and open fire on them! It's all the fault of their accursed uniforms, and those bell-topped shakos of theirs."

"Where's the Army?"

"Before Mont St. Jean, rather

Continued from Page 44

more than a couple of miles south of Waterloo, bivouacking for the night."

Worth raised his brows. "That seems somewhat close to Brussels."

"No help for it. Old Blucher's gone eighteen miles to his rear, to Wavre. We had to do likewise, of course. But don't worry! We're in a better case than at Quatre Bras; the ground there was impossible for cavalry."

The valet came into the room just then, and conversation was suspended while the Colonel's mud-caked Hessians were pulled off his pantaloons peeled from his legs, and warm water fetched to wash away the dirt, and the sweat and the bloodstains from his tired body. By the time he came downstairs again, in his service uniform, a tray had been brought to the salon, and a table spread. He walked into the room just ahead of his brother, smiled rather wearily at Judith, and then saw Barbara standing by the fireplace. A frown creased his brow; his eyes, heavy and bloodshot, blinked at her in a puzzled way. His brain felt clogged: he did not know how she came to be there, and felt too tired to speculate much upon the circumstance. A nightmare of estrangement lay between them, but he had been in the saddle almost continuously for two days, had taken part in a fierce battle against superior odds, and knew that perhaps the most serious engagement of his life was ahead of him. His mind refused to cope with personal considerations; he merely held out his hand, and said: "I didn't know you were here. Bah. How do you do?"

Judith, who had expected some show at least of surprise, and had been prepared to whisk herself and Worth out of the room, felt that this calm greeting must affect Barbara like a douche of cold water. But Barbara just took the Colonel's hand and answered: "Yes, Charles, I am here. Never mind that now. You are hungry and tired."

"I don't know when I have been more so," he admitted, turning from her, and seating himself at the table. He accepted a plate of cold beef from Judith, and added: "Both your brothers are safe. I think George got a scratch or two to-day, but nothing serious. I suppose Canning gave you an account of our engagement at Quatre Bras, Julian?"

HE pushed back his chair from the table, and stood up, and went to the window, drawing back the curtains a little way. The rain still beat against the panes. "A Wellington night!" he said, and let the curtain fall back into place. He looked over his shoulder at Worth. "I want one of your horses, Julian. My poor brute could scarcely stand up under me when I brought him in."

"You had better take the bay; he's a stayer."

"You may not see him again," said the Colonel, with the flicker of a smile.

"I daresay I shan't. How many have you lost so far?"

"Only one, Judith, will you let me raid the larder. We're devilish short of rations."

"Of course; take what you want," she answered readily. "But must you go back yet? Is it not possible for you to rest for a while?"

He shook his head. "No; I must be back at Headquarters by midnight, you know. It's nearly ten now, and in this wet and darkness it will take me two hours, or more."

Continued Next Week

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Marriage can last if . . .

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ww 2180

DINNER GOWN

WW2180.—A charming gown for dinner wear. The new shaped neckline is very sophisticated. Sizes, 32-inch to 38-inch bust. Material required: 6¼ yards, 36 inches wide. **PAPER PATTERN, 1/1.**

STREET MODE

WW2184.—Inverted pleat, patch pockets, and smart neckline are lovely features of this daytime frock. Sizes, 32-inch to 38-inch bust. Material required: 3¾ yards, 36 inches wide. **PAPER PATTERN, 1/1.**

SOPHISTICATED

WW2185. — Sophisticated mode for 'tween season wear. The fullness to the front of the skirt, and bodice are unusual touches. Sizes, 32-inch to 38-inch bust. Material required, 3¼ yards, 36 inches wide. **PAPER PATTERN, 1/1.**

ww 2184

COAT AND FROCK

WW2182.—A new style lightweight coat for early autumn wear. Sizes, 32-inch to 38-inch bust. Material required: 3¾ yards for coat, and 3 5-8th yards for frock, and 3-8th yard contrast. **PAPER PATTERN, 1/6.**

WEE FROCK

WW2183.—Pleated skirt and Peter Pan collar make a charming frock for the little one. Sizes 1-6 years. Material required: 1 5-8th yards, 36 inches wide, and ¼ yard contrast. **PAPER PATTERN, 10d.**

ww 2183

CHILD'S HAT

WW2181.—A remnant will suffice to make this dainty hat for the little one. Sizes, 6-12 years. Material required: ¼ yard, 36 inches wide. **PAPER PATTERN, 10d.**

ww 2181

ww 2182

ww 2186

ww 2187

CHIC STYLE

WW2186.—This snappy style introduces a new type of sleeve. Sizes, 32-inch to 38-inch bust. Material required: 3 5-8th yards, 36 inches wide, and 3-8th yard contrast. **PAPER PATTERN, 1/1.**

SMART COAT

WW2187.—Dashing autumn model, easy to make, and very smart. Sizes, 32-inch to 38-inch bust. Material required: 3¾ yards, 36 inches wide. **PAPER PATTERN, 1/1.**

ww 2185

TO TOP AN AUTUMN SKIRT

SOFTLY draped and sporting blouses (as illustrated at right), necessary to your autumn wardrobe, may be made from this week's splendid three-in-one concession pattern.

Price, 3d., available in three sizes, 32, 34, 36-inch bust, pattern is available now from our Pattern Department. To obtain, follow directions on coupon.

OUR SPECIAL CONCESSION PATTERN

Material required: 36 inches wide:

No. 1, 1¾ yds.
No. 2, 2 yards
No. 3, 2 yards

Concession Pattern Coupon

This coupon is available for one month from the date of issue only. To obtain a concession pattern of the garments illustrated at right, fill in the coupon and post it, WITH 3d. STAMP, clearly marking on the envelope, "Pattern Department," to any of the following addresses. Be careful to specify which size you want. A 3d. STAMP MUST BE FORWARDED FOR EACH COUPON ENCLOSED. An extra charge of threepence will be made for patterns over one month old.

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NEWCASTLE.—Box 41, G.P.O.
PERTH.—Box 451G, G.P.O.
SYDNEY.—Box 4290YY, G.P.O.
If calling, 168 Castlereagh Street, or Dalton House, 115 Pitt Street.
TASMANIA.—Write to The Australian Women's Weekly, Box 185, G.P.O., Melbourne.
NEW ZEALAND.—Write to Sydney office.

Should you desire to call for the pattern, please see address of our office, which will be found on Page 2.

PLEASE PRINT NAME AND ADDRESS IN BLOCK LETTERS.

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Size ..... Pattern Coupon, 19/3/'38.

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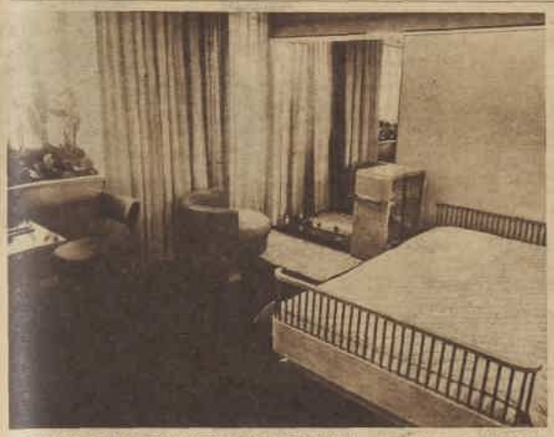
THE AUSTRALIAN WOMEN'S WEEKLY

HOME MAKER

March 19, 1938. *A special section devoted to the interests of home-lovers* *Page One*



THIS IS A MODERN GERMAN BEDROOM—a direct contrast to the English room at right. Do you like it?

A MOST ENCHANTING ROOM. Designed by a woman, it is carried out in off-white with a clever dash of brilliant yellow.

FOR BEDROOM ENCHANTMENT

Subtle use of restful colors... soft, diffused lighting... and lovely fabrics are important factors

By.... OUR HOME DECORATOR

EVERY woman will delight in the illustrations reproduced on this page. Both are interesting, attractive, and brimful of ideas.

The picture featured at top was obtained in London, the other I secured in Germany. Both rooms were designed by stylists and demonstrate the modern trend in each country.

I am sure that every home-lover will benefit from these practical hints on bedroom furnishing given by Derek Patmore.

Regarded as one of the foremost authorities in England on modern decoration, this expert has just published a most comprehensive and informative book for homemakers, entitled "Decoration for the Small Home." I can sincerely commend this profusely-illustrated work, which should be obtainable here in the very near future. Our copy came from Putnam, Derek Patmore's London publishers.

Here are his views on bedroom treatment:

In contrast to the living-room and dining-room, the bedroom is very personal. Here one retires for rest and seclusion. It is a room which asks for quiet and repose, and these qualities can only be achieved by the use of restful, harmonious color schemes.

Choose Light Colors

A RESTFUL background is created by means of careful selection and the elimination of all unnecessary ornament. Light colors, such as grey, blue, pink, green, beige, turquoise, and yellow are suitable shades to use in the decoration of this room.

The lighting arrangements should be soft and restful and carefully distributed about the whole room.

Other essentials for the small bedroom are a comfortable bed, a soft covering on the floor, plenty of cupboard space, a proper dressing-table, and a sensibly-planned bedside table.

When designing a small bedroom, it is best not to use too many contrasting colors in your scheme of decoration. The simplest combination of colors, such as apricot and light blue, pale green and yellow, navy-blue and white, red and white, will be found the most satisfactory, particularly if the main color in each scheme is only sparingly emphasised by the contrasting shade.

The furniture used in this room should be limited to what is required for everyday use.

For instance, the average bedroom needs a cupboard, a chest of drawers, a bedside table, and the bed itself. If possible, it is a good idea to include a small armchair, and one or two upright chairs, but the inclusion of these last pieces will depend on the size of the room.

The decoration of any bedroom, whether it be large or small, must centre round the bed itself. This is the focus around which your scheme must be built.

Divan Style Liked

CONTEMPORARY designers favor the low divan bed because it is eminently practical. It takes up less space than the old-fashioned bed with its heavy framework, it lends itself to different decorative effects, and it is comparatively inexpensive. In a small bedroom, where space is limited, it is advisable to use a divan bed in preference to a bedstead wherever it is possible.

Many people ruin their bedrooms by placing the bed in the wrong position. Naturally, the correct position for the bed will depend on the shape and dimensions of the room, but, as a rule, the bed should be placed up against one wall.

It should lie across the room so that the light from the window falls across the bed and not against it.

Head-boards, covered in material, are much used in modern decoration, and they often lend a very decorative note to the whole bedroom. Head-boards upholstered in a floral chintz of a woven material are practical and less expensive, but if you decide to treat the head-board in this manner it is well to make the bedspread in the same fabric which is used for covering the head-board.

This will give a sense of unity to your scheme.

Having settled the position of the bed, there now comes the question of where to put the dressing-table.

In many rooms the shape of the window will lend itself to a built-in dressing-table, and this will save room. In such cases it is best to make the dressing-table level with the ledge of the window.

When planning the use of built-in furniture try to arrange so that the furniture is long and low in design, for this will heighten the room and give it an illusion of space.

Built-in cupboards are frequently used in modern bedrooms, and these again are invaluable when space becomes a consideration. Often a cupboard can be built into an angle of the wall. When this is done, use plywood, and then paint it the same color as the walls. In this way it will be less noticeable and help to make the room appear larger than it really is.

The question of floor-covering comes next. In a bedroom where the deadening of outside sounds and noise becomes desirable, the floor should be covered in a tight-fitting carpet wherever possible.

A plain-colored carpet fitted on top of a felt underlay will help to create an atmosphere of tranquillity in this room, and it will also deaden outside sounds much more effectively than a floor left with polished boards and covered with rugs.

Often a small modern rug or a sheepskin rug will look well placed on top of the plain carpet in front of the bed or beside the dressing-table.

But this is not necessary, although such touches always create a feeling of comfort and repose.

Linoleum and Felt

LINOLEUM is a possible floor covering for this room, especially the plain-colored linoleums, and they are helpful in an inexpensive scheme. But linoleum never looks as effective as a plain carpet. Some designers use plain-colored felt for floor coverings.

With the present reaction against the bare severity of early attempts at modernism, period influences have been coming back into favor. Such a reaction is welcome because it enables us to vary the monotony of plain colors, and the graceful line of period styles will often contrast very effectively with the simple forms of modern cabinetmaking.

Often a period style can be indicated by merely introducing one period piece, such as a vase or a fabric patterned in a classic design, into a room.

When this is the case, the way to decorate the room is to select the main colors used in the coloring of the vase or fabric, and then use these as the basis for your color scheme.

For instance, suppose that you use a printed material decorated with an Adam design in pink, golden yellow, and white. Paint the walls cream, and cover the bed in the same pink as used in the curtains. Hang your dressing-table with flounces of pink chintz bound with golden yellow, and cover the floor with a dark brown carpet.

Fabrics play an all-important part in the furnishing of a bedroom, and frequently a perfectly plain room can be decorated by means of the fabrics used in it.

The choice of furnishing material is so wide that it is only possible to suggest some of the many color combinations which these fabrics can inspire.

Floral chintzes always look attractive in a bedroom, and they have the additional advantage of being hard-wearing and inexpensive.

Woven woollen fabric, linen material woven with artificial silk, moire silks, artificial silk taffetas, gaily colored cretonnes, quilted materials—here is a bewildering profusion of materials. It remains for everyone to make her own choice.

The bedroom is an intensely personal room. So try to reflect your own personality when you are planning the decoration of this room.

Despite the advice of experts and friends, you will find that the scheme which pleases you most will be the one which you yourself selected or imagined.

Do not be afraid of making mistakes. Try to have the courage of your own taste.

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DON'T THINK that you cannot look glamorous. Perfect grooming, an intriguing coiffure, and the right evening frock can make you look adorably attractive. Above you see a fetching evening coiffure favored by lovely Claire Trevor, Fox star. At right, you see Luise Rainer, of M.-G.-M. fame, bathing her eyes. One reason why her eyes sparkle so.

BEFORE YOU SLIP *Into Evening* DRESS

By Our Beauty Specialist

. . . Spend fifteen minutes this way in making yourself beautifully ready for theatre, party or dance.

DON'T RUB OFF surplus powder with your puff; use a complexion brush as demonstrated by Madge Evans, M.-G.-M. star.

THE modern woman is at last realising that she should change her make-up just as often as she changes her costume or frock.

Even so, there are still many who cling to daytime style of make-up when they change into party-time dress at night.

Why not be a little more glamorous at night ? Why not spend a little more time on your face when going to a special evening affair? . . . Follow these suggestions and great will be your reward.

First you must look to your skin.

A beautiful brown coloring may be perfectly attractive on a beach, but not in an evening dress.

Therefore, if your skin is not all that you could desire, and you can spare the extra few minutes, dab all the exposed portions of the body with a little fresh milk.

Allow the milk to dry on to the skin and you will then find that it is at least two shades lighter, and that it has acquired a velvety, matte appearance, which gives a perfect foundation for your make-up.

If it is very sun-tanned, and you purpose wearing a backless evening dress, you will pass by the milk treatment, and resort to art.

Damp a pad of cotton wool in water, and after shaking your bottle of liquid powder pour a little of the powder on to the cotton wool. Now proceed to cover the whole of your neck, shoulders and back with the application.

Also pay particular attention to your arms.

Usually the upper arm is scorched and wrinkled (even in winter weather the upper arm suffers), and it also will require an application of the liquid powder.

The advantages of liquid powder over ordinary flake powder are these: The liquid will last longer, will adhere to the skin better, and will resist the heat. Therefore, for all exposed portions of your body always use the liquid.

Should you make a mistake and the liquid powder become streaky, immediately wash it off. Never attempt to patch it, as that will only result in a spoiled make-up.

Then you must pay special attention to your eyes.

If they are at all red and sore, immediately give them a boracic eye-bath. They simply must be white and sparkling, as you never know who may be glancing into your eyes during the evening.

If it suits you, you can apply a little cosmetic to the eyelashes and brows, and also a little eye-shadow to the lids.

But remember, Through all the phases of your make-up you must strive after the natural and at no period should you appear at all artificial.

Hygienic Precautions

AND then there is your mouth. This is a point which is nearly always neglected. You apply your lipstick, but you forget all about the inside of your mouth.

Therefore, before you apply any mouth make-up, give your throat a good antiseptic gargle or wash.

This will not only help to keep your own breath sweet, but it will also help to guard you against any infection.

Oh, and there is your nose to consider. If it will persist in shining, and tiny grease bubbles break through your powder, you will have to procure a special anti-shine lotion from your chemist, or else make up your own lotion from the following prescription:

Zinc oxide, 4 drachms; carmine, 7 grains; glycerine, 5 drachms; calamine, 3 drachms; elderflower water up to 3 ounces.

Dab a little of the above on the nose after washing, and before powdering.

First "tone" up your face to make it feel young and full of life by making a good application of skin tonic. Then apply some cleansing cream. After a few moments remove the cream with clean face tissues. Apply a good powder base and dust on your powder lightly. Don't rub it on the skin.

Then, so that your make-up will be permanent, it is wise to apply a foundation of liquid powder, finally dusting with your ordinary face powder.

Lipstick and rouge will also be applied carefully.

If yours is a skin which soon becomes florid you can counteract this to a certain extent by giving a final dusting of either mauve or green powder.

Another point which is often missed in evening make-up is the hands.

In daytime these need very little attention, apart from the usual manicure, but for evenings they will also require a hand-whitening lotion.

Placed against the dark suiting of your partner at a dance they will be on show for every person to see, and the wise girl will take the precaution of massaging them with either a cucumber or honey and almond lotion.

Liquid powder can also be applied, but if you do this be sure to remove the surplus with a clean piece of chamois, otherwise you will leave a powdery trail on your partner's coat.

Next time you purpose going to a theatre, a party or dance, carry out these few hints on make-up and notice how different you will feel!

AFTER APPLYING LIPSTICK in the usual way, use the tip of your little finger to work it smoothly, evenly over the lower lip. Do this carefully—don't smudge it.

Don't imagine you must pay absurd "glamour" prices for high-sounding products, in order to get fine quality in your cosmetics and flattering modern shades in your make-up. The simple facts about beauty preparations are these: It is impossible to get finer quality than that offered you by Cashmere Bouquet, backed by Colgate's 132 years of research and experience in making exquisite toilet adjuncts, and unnecessary and foolish to pay more than the modest price which the complete Cashmere Bouquet Beauty Ensemble will cost you. Yet the prices are fair and reasonable because the House of Colgate does not believe in making an excessive profit. Send for free Make-up Chart to The Colgate Department, Box 2701C, G.P.O., Sydney.

COLGATE'S Cashmere Bouquet COSMETICS AND BEAUTY PREPARATIONS

4/278

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New ways to vary Lenten Meals with KRAFT CHEESE

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NO end to the delicious meals you can devise with Kraft, to give your Lenten menus . . any menus . . more variety and health value. As a satin-smooth sauce or a main ingredient, Kraft Cheese abounds with appetite-inviting flavour and precious food elements. It is rich in sustaining protein and energy units, vitamin A . . and the milk minerals, calcium and phosphorus, so essential for maintaining strong bones and sound teeth. Actually it takes a gallon of rich milk to make a single pound of Kraft Cheese. And it's as digestible as milk.

CONTINENTAL SCRAMBLED EGGS

8 eggs, Asparagus tips, 1½ cups Kraft Pimento Cheese, shredded, 2 tablespoons butter, 1 cup milk. Salt, pepper.

Drain asparagus tips and heat in butter. Place round edge of large flat plate and pile up the centre with a fluffy mould of scrambled eggs (use your usual recipe for this). Garnish lavishly with golden shreds of Kraft Pimento, the famous cheese that is flavoured with tasty morsels of Spanish Pimento. This recipe serves six.

CLIP OUT THESE RECIPES — KEEP THEM HANDY

SALMON LOAF, CHEESE SAUCE

8 oz. packet Kraft Old English Cheese. 1 tablespoon chopped onion. 1 lb. tin salmon. 2 beaten eggs. 1 cup breadcrumbs. 1 cup milk. Pepper. Salt.

Bone and flake the salmon, and mix with breadcrumbs, onion, ¼ cup milk, beaten up eggs, and seasoning. Pour into buttered dish, and bake in a moderate oven about 45 minutes, until firm. And now for the cheese sauce to complete this dish. Slice Old English into a double boiler with a ¼ cup of milk, and cook over a low gas. Add the remaining milk from time to time and stir until smooth. Enough for six.

Try these Delicious Kraft Cheeses too

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KRAFT WELSH RAREBIT. A glorious rarebit, seasoned, and all ready for you to slice and serve.

FREE RECIPE BOOK

FREE RECIPE BOOK. Send in to Kraft Walker Cheese Co., Dept. (A12), Riverside Avenue, Melbourne; 38 Clarence Street, Sydney; or 74 Eagle Street, Brisbane; for free copy of Kraft Recipe Book, "Cheese and Ways to Serve It."

The world's finest cheeses are made by KRAFT

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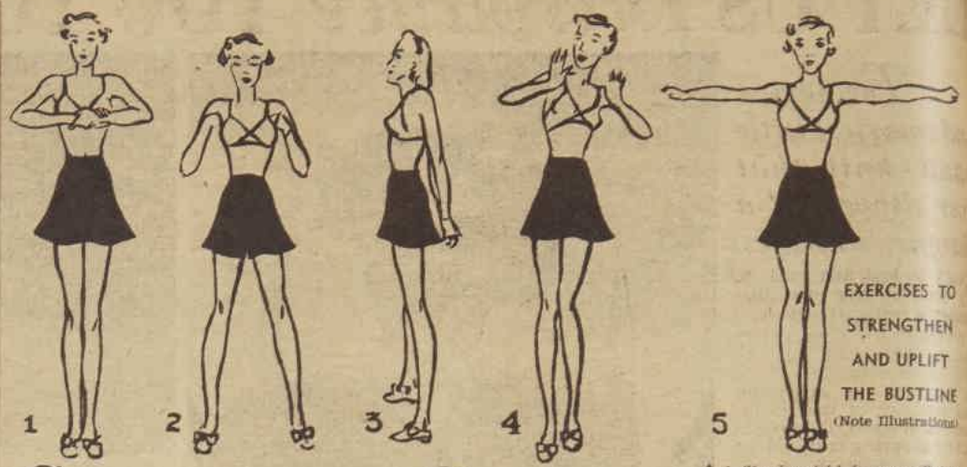
FILM STARS have graceful figures, but they work hard to keep them. Why not acquire a lovely one yourself? It can be done! Above, you see a most attractive study of Grace Bradley, Paramount star. Note her striking coiffure.



EXERCISES TO STRENGTHEN AND UPLIFT THE BUSTLINE (Note Illustrations)

GRACEFUL CURVES

By A BEAUTY EXPERT

Cultivate them! Rounded loveliness must be yours in order to wear the new clothes with charm and distinction . . .

CURVES, let me assure you, really and truly are in fashion. You can't wear the new draped clothes properly unless you've got curves—and very definite curves at that.

The lovely curve of a firm bust is one of beauty's greatest gifts. And yet that's one of the few parts of the figure where nature could have done a bit better for us—there is no really adequate natural support for the breasts.

I promise you that there is a lot that can be done to firm and round a flat bustline. But before I tell you what you can do I'm going to issue a solemn warning about what you mustn't do!

There are certain beautifying methods such as massage and patting and so on, which are beneficial to the rest of the figure, but which might do serious injury to the breast.

For instance, you must not massage the breasts yourself. It needs a qualified masseur who understands their extremely delicate formation to do this.

Do Not Pinch Flesh

YOU must not try to reduce the flesh by pinching or rolling the skin.

You must not compress your bust with tight, flattening brassieres.

You must not attempt any sort of figure control if you're expecting a babe, or have just had one, without first asking your doctor.

Now that I've had my say about that, I'll cheer you up by telling you what you can do to make a very real difference to the shape and uplift of your bust.

To begin with: Decide whether your bust is out of proportion to the rest of your figure, or whether you are just overweight or underweight generally. Because if general weight is the trouble, then you must follow a fattening or slimming diet, and exercise.

If you're sure that your bust really is too tiny for the rest of you, then here is an external treatment for it, which will help to fill out the salt-cellars and flatten your chest.

Warm a towel in hot water and lay it over your upper chest and neck (nowhere near the breasts), then, if you can get it, apply a turtle oil cream at once, so that it soaks into the pores, which have already been opened by the heat to receive it.

If you're not actually thin, and your bustline is undeveloped but firm, I wouldn't try to make it larger. That will come with the years, and later you'll be glad to have a figure that is young for your age.

Far the best beauty treatment for uplifting a flat bustline is exercise. Breathing exercises, rhythmical and deep, which carry the air right down to the bottom of your lungs, will expand your chest.

Prima donnas and swimmers all have well-developed chests through learning to breathe correctly.

1. *Stand upright, tummy pulled in, head erect. Put your arms akimbo, grasping a wrist with each hand. Pull hard on each wrist as if you were trying to get out of your own grip. You can feel yourself bracing—expanding the muscles of your chest.*
2. *Stand with feet apart, shoulders back. Clench your fists and tuck one under each armpit. Circle your elbows in the air, taking a deep breath as they come forward and up, and expelling it as they go backwards and down.*
3. *With your feet apart, clasp your hands behind your back, pulling them down and down, tipping your chin up gradually, and breathing in deeply. Relax gently, breathing out.*
4. *The "go-away" exercise—you simply stand up and push gradually and very hard with your hands as though you were pushing something very heavy away from you. Feel the muscles of the upper chest working hard.*
5. *Stand erect, heels together, arms stretched sideways on a level with the shoulders. Breathe in deeply, raising the arms till they're straight overhead. Hold your breath and this position for two or three seconds. Lower the arms slowly, breathing out and forcing every bit of air out of the lungs as you do it.*

There are exercises to brace your shoulders back—round shoulders account for many a sagging bustline—and exercises to brace and strengthen the muscles of the upper chest. You'll find them all here in the table of special exercises I have worked out for you.

Console yourself with the thought that quite the worst part of an exercise is making up your mind to do it. I don't know how pampered you are, but personally I'd never appreciate an exercise that meant getting up early and standing in front of an open window on a freezing cold morning. The kind I like are the ones that can be done at odd moments. And that's the kind I've planned for you.

You can do a tremendous amount to mould and uplift your figure by giving it the right support, so that the muscles are given some help with their work.

There are so many different kinds of brassieres made now, and the best ones are cut with a thorough knowledge of anatomy.

Obliging Science

MOST of the new season's dresses, both for day and evening wear, have shirring or ruching down the centre front bodice and V-necks, which absolutely demand well-defined bust contours. This means that for large figures you need a very firm, flat piece of brassiere between the cups.

Science, very obligingly has come to our aid to help us all to achieve these youthful lines.

Flat-chested people are in a panic about these new definitely "feminine" lines. But they needn't worry. Frills and flounces are still being added to a good foundation brassiere, and there are even "dummy" busts to be had for extreme cases!

Brassieres, too, can be had so wonderfully cut that, even in the daintiest of materials, it will "uplift" quite a heavy figure. For really large people an all-in-one corselette or a brassiere which has an extra flattening piece attached below the bust is comfier and more moulding.

Tek
VALUE
indeed at this
NEW PRICE

1/6

TEK—soundly economical before—at the new reduced price, offers you outstanding tooth brush value.

It is the same TEK, with the same features that make it so different from every other tooth brush, and the same outstanding length of life. TEK has better shape. Its short curved-out head of bristles fits everywhere in your mouth. TEK is "lively" — it searches out tiniest crevices, and leaves your teeth and gums sound and safe. TEK has better bristles, too. Bristles that keep their better shape even after long hard use.

TEK surgically sealed in a cellophane carton. Six colours. Bristles medium and hard. Price NOW 1/6 (or extra hard, price 1/9). TEK "Junior" 1/-.

TO RETAILERS:
REBATES ON STOCK
HAVE CEASED

A product of Johnson & Johnson — World's largest makers of Surgical Dressings, Johnson's Baby Powder, Soap and Cream, Modess, etc.

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LET US *Introduce* YOU TO...

The newest and smartest little hand-knit that ever slipped off a designer's needles.

EASY to knit and good to look at, this chic little jumper is really irresistible.

It's the kind of jumper every fashion-wise woman could do with in her wardrobe. It can be worn on cool afternoons and evenings in the home; under a tailored, lightweight suit for shopping or travelling.

You may work it in the attractive colors as suggested below or in any two colors you desire.

Buy the required quantity of wool next time you visit a shop, keep this page by you, and then set out in all confidence to make a jumper which will look as adorable on you as it does on the girl in the picture.

Here follow the directions:—

Materials: 11oz. of 2-ply crochet wool, rust-brown, 1oz. of 2-ply crochet wool, dark blue, 1 pair needles No. 12, 1 medium crochet hook, 13 buttons.

Measurements: Length from top of shoulder, 21 inches; bust, 36 inches; length of sleeve seam, 6 inches.

Abbreviations: K., knit; p., purl; f., forward (wool forward around right needle); st., stitch; tog., together; inc., increase; dec., decrease.

Tension: 10 sts. and 12 rows to 1 inch.

THE BACK

Using No. 12 needles and rust wool cast on 148 sts. (k. into back of cast on sts.).

Work in ribbing of k. 2, p. 2 for 3 inches, then work in pattern as follows:

1st Row: Right side, * p. 1, f., p. 3, p. 3 tog., p. 3, f., repeat from * to * to last 8 sts., p. 8.
2nd Row and all even Rows: K.
3rd Row: Repeat 1st row.
5th Row: Repeat 1st row.
7th Row: Repeat 1st row.
9th Row: P. 2 tog., * p. 3, f., p. 1, f., p. 3, p. 3 tog., repeat from * to last 6 sts., p. 3, f., p. 3.
11th Row: Repeat 9th row.
13th Row: Repeat 9th row.
15th Row: Repeat 9th row.
16th Row: Repeat 2nd row.

These 16 rows form the pattern and are repeated throughout.

Continue in pattern and inc. 1 st. each end of 25th row and every 7th row following 14 times.

When work measures 13½ inches shape armholes by casting off 3 sts. at beginning of next 12 rows, then work even in pattern until armhole measures 7½ inches, then shape shoulders by casting off 3 sts. at beginning of every row until 48 sts. remain. Cast off.

THE FRONT

The lower border runs into a point towards the centre. Using No. 12 needles and rust wool cast on 148 sts. and work in ribbing of k. 2, p. 2 for 3 inches.

Change to pattern and in the 1st row k. 1st 29 sts. in pattern, the following 90 sts. in ribbing as lower border, 29 sts. in pattern.

In each of the following rows inc. the pattern section by 3 sts. each side towards the centre so that in the 17th pattern row the ribbed section disappears.

From this point the front is worked in 2 parts as follows:—

1st Row: Work 74 sts. in pattern, leave on spare needle for left front, working 74 sts in pattern.

Continue in pattern as for back, inc. 1 st. at seam edge of the 25th row and every 7th row following 11 times.

When work measures 13½ inches, shape armhole by casting off 3 sts. every 2nd row at armhole edge 6 times, then work even in pattern until armhole measures 7½ inches, then shape shoulder by casting off 3 sts. at armhole edge of every 2nd row until 24 sts. remain.

Cast off the 24 sts. which are later turned back to form rever.

FACING

Cast on 3 sts. and work in stocking-stitch (k. 1 row, p. 1 row).

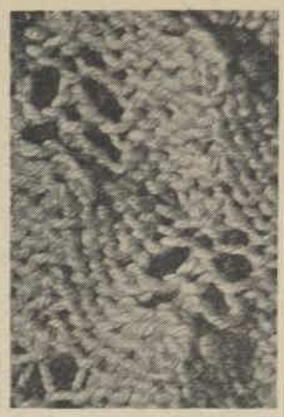
In the 3rd row and in every 3rd row hereafter inc. 1 st. on the edge where you begin until there are 28 sts. on the needle, cast off.

This facing is sewn and turned into rever; the p. surface is the right side.

LEFT FRONT

Join wool at sts. left on spare needle and work to correspond with right front, working the shaping at opposite end of the row.

NOW TAKE UP your needles and knit this smart jumper which features a most unusual stitch. Easy-to-follow directions are given on this page.



SHOWING close-up of the attractive stitch used in the jumper pictured at left. Simple stocking-stitch makes the cute bows and loops; ribbing finishes sleeves and waistline.

THE SLEEVES
(Both Alike)

Using No. 12 needles and rust wool cast on 112 sts. (k. into back of cast on sts.) and work in ribbing of k. 2, p. 2 for 1½ inches. Change to pattern and work as for back, inc. 1 st. at each end of the 11th row and every 7th row following 7 times. When sleeve measures 6 inches shape top by casting off 3 sts. at beginning of next 8 rows, then dec. 1 st. each end of every 2nd row 10 times, then dec. 1 st. each end of every row until 16 sts. remain. Cast off.

THE BOWS

Each one consists of a straight strip, which is held tog. in the centre with a knitted loop. For each one, using rust wool, cast on 48 sts. and work in stocking-stitch for 1½ inches. Cast off.

LOOPS

With blue wool cast on 16 sts. and work in the same manner as the bows for 1½ inches. Cast off. The purled surfaces of both bows and loops form the right side.

TO MAKE UP

Press with a warm iron and damp cloth.

Join shoulders, sew up side and sleeve seams, sew in sleeves, gathering at shoulder, sew on bows as shown in illustration, stitch facing to revers and press into position.

Using rust wool, work 1 row of double crochet along front openings, and on the right side crochet 13 loops to act as buttonholes.

Sew on buttons to correspond with loops.

What's your handicap?

Maybe it's a husband or a son with a "diffienlt" appetite. But watch him with a few sandwiches of Peck's Anchovette or Salmon and Shrimp! And watch him carefully, because they disappear like lightning. No wonder people all say "Peck's when you're peckish."

Peck's ANCHOVETTE FISH PASTE

SKIN BLEMISHES DISAPPEAR!

PROMPT RELIEF FROM ECZEMA, PSORIASIS, ACNE, PIMPLES, VARICOSE ULCERS, DANDRUFF AND ALL SKIN AFFECTIONS.

Mr. Richard Diamond.

These and similar skin complaints have been quickly and completely relieved under the special and expert treatment of Mr. R. Richard Diamond, Ph.C., M.P.S., M.I.O., of Sydney.

TYPICAL EXAMPLES OF MR. DIAMOND'S SUCCESS.

Working man (Marrickville, N.S.W.) suffered from psoriasis for several years. Reports complete recovery after two weeks of Diamond Treatment.

Girl (Cootamundra) with bad Acne and face pimples. Permanent relief after three weeks of Diamond Treatment.

FREE DIAGNOSIS

Readers are invited to write or call for a FREE DIAGNOSIS of their case. Describe your symptoms fully. Mr. Diamond has on file many hundreds of letters from grateful patients.

Write to
MR. RICHARD DIAMOND, PhC.,
Diamond's Pharmacies,
22 Rawson Place,
(Opposite Lowe's, near Central Railway),
Sydney.

NEW PLASMIC
America's Most Talked Of Skin Rejuvenator

Actual Photo. Mrs. Mavis Brentwood, New South Head Rd., Rose Bay. Taken Jan. 1938.

Actual Photo. Mrs. Mavis Brentwood, after 18 applications of New Plasmic. Taken August 18, 1938.

ABSOLUTELY removes almost instantaneously WRINKLES, LINES, OPEN PORES, BLACKHEADS, PIMPLES, and all SKIN BLEMISHES arising from any causes whatsoever.

NEW PLASMIC ACTS LIKE MAGIC

Restores PERMANENTLY to old or middle age the arts and complexion of youth.

REJUVENATES THE SKIN TISSUES

Your complexion will look Glorious even after the first treatment and will become fresh, smooth, velvety and young.

Not a line. Not a blemish. No injurious after effects. Contains no astringent.

SATISFACTION GUARANTEED
CALL FOR A FREE DEMONSTRATION. LARGE TUBE SUFFICIENT FOR 12 APPLICATIONS POSTED FREE FOR 5/-.

Ladies unable to call can have a trial treatment posted free for one shilling and six penny stamps.

JACK AFRIAT, Pacific House, 296 Pitt Street.
Next Bathurst St., 3rd Floor. Take lift. Also obtainable at Washington Neal, Patillo-son's, and other leading chemists.

Viyella REGD.

for children

from the day they're born

They call it the fabric that makes healthy babies and happy, normal children . . . because Viyella never loses its softness in the washing; Viyella never shrinks, and so protects children from discomfort through shrunken neckbands, armholes, etc.; Viyella keeps children warm — but not too warm. Whether you dress baby in fabric or knitted garments make sure they are 'Viyella.' Send for free patterns.

NURSERY VIYELLA, 27in. wide, in cream, plain pastel shades, printed designs and woven patterns from 4/6 per yd.

NURSERY CLYDELLA, 27in. wide, in cream, plain pastel shades, printed designs and woven patterns from 3/6 per yd.

NURSERY VIYELLA KNITTING BOOK

48 pages — 50 new and exclusive garments for children up to 8 years. Price 6d. from leading retailers and booksellers — if you cannot obtain it locally, send 8d. in stamps to address below.

VIYELLA SOCKS FOR CHILDREN

Now available in cream and full range of shades. Will not shrink or yellow. From 1/11 per pair. V-85-13

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WHO IS THE GIRL?

. . . that NINTH WOMAN who is always herself?

● All women are not born "free and equal." There are some days when some women suffer severely. There used not to be anything much to do about it. But to-day, forty-four thousand have accepted the blessed relief Myzone brings.

● You can easily tell that "ninth" woman—the intelligent woman—who first learned to rely on Myzone . . . she is always a picture of poise—serene and well-possessed—smart, bright-eyed, alert . . . the dry vagueness of her femininity is never dimmed by "spells" spells.

● Do you suffer? Taken beforehand, Myzone will ignore such pain. But even when pain and headache is most severe, or prolonged, two tablets with a cup of tea (or drink of water) will bring complete relief in 7 minutes!

● Myzone contains the marvellous new octavia tonic-ingredient **compound** discovery now recommended by specialists as being the most harmless, certain and swift way to relieve pain without possibility of "dopeing" after-effects.

● Get a box of Myzone to-day. 2/- at every chemist. **Try it on your very next headache!**

PRODUCT OF International Laboratories

NEEDLE ETCHINGS

. . . A joy to embroider and suitable for small or big rooms, modern or period furnishings.

IMAGINE the picturesque charm of a framed needle picture! You have the opportunity of securing either one or both of these featured on your right.

The larger galleon design, set in a frame of waratahs, Christmas bells and flannel flowers, measures 15 x 11 inches. The smaller galleon measures 10½ x 7 inches.

Both designs are stamped on white, cream, blue, pink, green and yellow linen and may be obtained from our Needlework Department.

The wildflowers would look enchanting worked in their natural colors, and the ship could be embroidered in gayest colors with the sails outlined in brown or black.

This larger needlework picture, stamped ready for working, costs 1/6, while the smaller picture, showing only the galleon, costs 1/1. Postage is free in each instance.

How To Frame Them

HERE is the way way to frame your needle picture after it is worked: If you are using an old frame, tack it over a piece of cardboard, which should be an inch smaller all round than the linen.

Turn the margin of the linen over on to the back of the cardboard all round, and with long stitches tack from side to side and top to bottom to hold it well stretched.

It can be set in the frame against the glass, and covered at the back.

Select narrow frames in black or brown wood, or if you prefer you can paint the frames to match the color of the chosen linen.

Blue or green frames would be jolly for a boy's room.

The larger needle picture could be hung on a map roller and the bottom edge finished with a tassel on each corner.

If you are clever at framing pictures with passe partout binding, you will delight in embroidering and framing these pictures for your home.

NEEDLEWORK PICTURES are the rage. Both picturesque designs illustrated here are stamped on linen ready for embroidering.

TRUST YOUR DENTIST
–he says KOLYNOS

TO MAKE TEETH SPARKLE *and* YOUR MOUTH HEALTHY

Use **KOLYNOS**, the tooth paste that will make you proud of your teeth. Only half-an-inch, used on a DRY brush morning and night will improve your teeth at once. They will feel cleaner. Soon they will look *naturally* brighter. Your teeth are cleansed perfectly—right down to the beautiful, *natural* enamel without harmful bleaching action or unnecessary abrasion.

This remarkable dental cream foams into every tiny crevice and kills millions of germs which are the cause of stain, tartar and decay. It is refreshing and pleasant to use. Cultivate the twice-a-day **KOLYNOS** habit that ensures a perfectly healthy mouth, firm gums and sparkling teeth. Get a tube to-day. Of all Chemists and Stores.

REDUCED PRICES ~~1/9~~ NOW 1/3 NEW DOUBLE SIZE 2/- PER TUBE

FOR YOUNG WIVES & MOTHERS

Mothercraft Questions and Answers

By A TRUBY KING EXPERT

THIS week's article deals with mothercraft problems which should be of wide interest to all mothers and mothers-to-be.

Question: Are iron tonics injurious to the teeth of little children?

Answer: If the teeth of children decay while taking an iron tonic we must look further for the reason. The injury to the teeth begins before the iron tonic is ordered—in fact, we must consider those symptoms which show that it is necessary to take extra iron.

When these are traced to their source we shall find the cause for the tooth decay, which is not brought about by the actual taking of iron, but by the causes that make its administration necessary.

Tooth decay is brought about by the lack of correct building properties in the blood itself.

The damage is done by some nutritional lack which is detrimental to the system and ultimately evinces itself upon the teeth.

BEST DENTIFRICE

Question A: My children's teeth decay at an early age. What is the best dentifrice to use to prevent this?

B: What is the best way to teach a child to use a tooth brush?

Answer: The best dentifrice is a correctly balanced diet. It is of no use to depend upon tooth brushes to prevent tooth decay. The initial work is done by the blood itself. If the building be wrong no tooth brush in the world will preserve the teeth. The best time to begin is through the health of the prospective mother.

TWO ARRESTING THOUGHTS

(1): No tooth has ever been made dirty enough outside the human body to decay.

(2): Decay of the teeth ceases at death.

In tooth decay the correct preventive and arrestive treatment lies not so much in the use of tooth brushes as in the administration of high mineral and vitamin natural foods, given in such form that the child can assimilate and use them satisfactorily.

HOW TO USE TOOTH BRUSH

Select a small tooth brush with bristles of medium texture. Be sure the bristles are securely implanted in the base. Obtain an unbreakable beaker of distinctive coloring. Keep these for the child's own use. Clean your own teeth regularly and let him watch you. Children are imitative. The child will soon learn to clean his own teeth. Use a pinch of salt in about half a cup of cool, boiled water.

CORRECT FOODS

Question: Why give fish and fish oils to little children? Is not fresh cow's milk sufficient?

Answer: The sea is a rich source of minerals and vitamins which has never been depleted.

Sea foods contain fine stores of minerals which are difficult to obtain, and often lacking in land-grown foods from depleted soils.

Phosphorus particularly is becoming increasingly difficult to obtain in sufficient amounts from land sources.

An infant cannot adequately use the calcium in milk for correct body-building unless he receives the proper amount of minerals and vitamins in conjunction with it.

Correspondingly, even though correctly equipped in the beginning, the child cannot maintain an A1 standard of health unless he is taught to select the right foods, and is continuously supplied with them.

Cod liver oil, being rich in vitamins, particularly helps baby to use the calcium milk. It is best used as a finely homogenised emulsion.

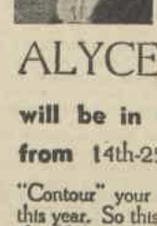
THE BACKWARD CHILD

QUESTION: What can be done to help a child who is backward at school? Is homework and teaching helpful?

Answer: If a small child be backward at school, make sure there are no defects such as: Deafness or defective vision, even in a minor degree, malnutrition from too little food, or too much wrongly-chosen food. The latter may evince themselves in a form of indigestion, characterised by abnormal appetite, continuous hunger or craving for food. This in turn gives rise to discomfort and mental slackness. An adequate night's rest and five minutes' explanation in the morning is better for the little child than teaching when the brain is tired or the mind worried by study problems.

Health is the first need of these important little people.

BERLEI TRUE-TO-TYPE FOUNDATIONS



The Berlei Fitting Supervisor

ALYCE M. REID

will be in our Corset Department from 14th-25th MARCH

"Contour" your figure. that's the way to be smart this year. So this visit of Alyce M. Reid is one you should not miss . . . she will advise and fit you without charge with the correct Berlei Foundation for your figure type. But don't delay . . .

Book an appointment, telephone M 6701

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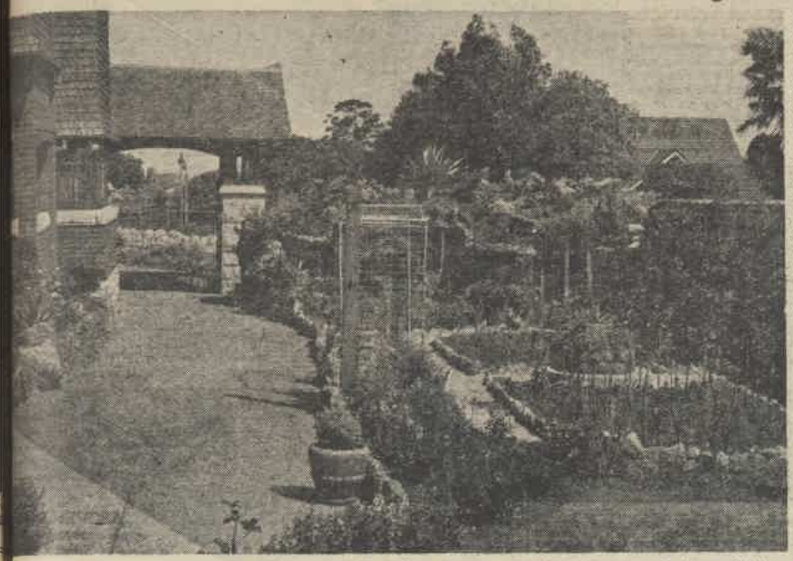
THIS BUSY *Month of* MARCH



GROWING a section of the spacious garden of Mrs. M. E. Palmer, Bradley's Head Rd., Mosman. Features of this picturesque garden are the rockeries, grottoes, and caves. In the background can be seen one of the caves decorated with rock-lilies, succulents, and other charming plants. In their cool depths ferns abound.

There's much to be done in the flower and vegetable garden—also in the bush-house Here's help for you . . . Says The Old Gardener

OFFICIALLY, the first month of autumn has slipped by.

Summer flowering plants are nearly at their end, so now we must get ready for the following display.

If you desire a beautiful show, plant out a bed of nemesia. Keep the colors separate if possible. An all-blue bed of nemesia is very attractive. The mixed variety also make a splendid display.

Virginian stock sown as a border to the nemesia would be most effective. Sow the seed where they are to remain, and then thin out to the desired distance apart. In sowing this kind of stock, keep the colors separate.

Sow one row of white, the next red, and so on.

Then, when this border flowers along with the nemesia, you will reap a happy reward for your efforts.

What about that pansy bed? No garden, whether large or small, is complete in the winter or summer without the pansy. They can be used for borders or massing.

Pansies have been hybridised now to such an extent that one can secure the choicest kinds. Some of the flowers are enormous. Easy to grow, demanding very little care, the pansy is welcomed in every garden.

A very good combination is to plant pansies in a massed bed with borders of vari-colored violas.

Here is another good suggestion for attractiveness: Plant daisies (Monstrosa) or letter-daisies with a bed of primroses and polyanthus. If you favor the suggestion, plant now.

Other Beauties

CINERARIAS are also splendid for late winter and early spring display. Semi-shaded corners suit them.

What about a bed of the perpetual-flowering carnations? They are always useful for cutting purposes, and with their fragrance and delicate colorings are rather sweet.

Stocks can still be planted out, and there is nothing more beautiful than a massed bed of the various colored varieties.

Larkspurs are also an added attraction to the garden. Easy to grow, and colorful, they win much admiration.

Cornflowers must not be forgotten. Their splendid blue is loved by all.

Delphiniums are attractive, don't miss planting them. They love plenty of sun. Calendulas do better if planted from now on to the end of the autumn. They make a lovely show. The other types of marigold are as attractive.

A well-kept lawn is always an asset to the well-kept garden; one harmonises with the other. A beautiful garden is lost if there are no lawns, or if the lawn does not coincide with the surroundings.

Now is good time to attend to the lawn. Fill up all those bare patches, either by putting in new turf or sowing seed.

Lawns : Bush-house

NEW lawns can also be made now. Deep digging, good drainage, fertile soil and first-class turf or seed will give you the ideal lawn.

Have a look over the bush-house. Many plants may need attention. Perhaps some may need re-potting. If so, see that the soil is good. Good leaf mould mixed with loamy soil with a sprinkle of blood and bone is the right material.

Keep an eye open for the various diseases in the bush-house during the autumn. This is the time that the red spider comes along. Just look on the under part of the leaves. If you see them discolored, showing little black or brown spots, get to work immediately and spray them with a suitable remedy for this pest.

Camellias are subjected to the red spider also. Examine the bush carefully.

Azaleas and rhododendrons should also be watched for the same trouble.

All indoor palms will need attention in reference to the many diseases likely to have attacked them. Scale and red spider are two of the worst diseases. If you find them affected, spray immediately.

Now is the time to plant climbers. All those bare walls, old stumps, bare rocks, fences and ugly corners—they all should be clothed. There is nothing more unsightly than the ugly spots and corners of a garden. With a little foresight exercised they could have been made beautiful with colored creepers, for there are many varieties to choose from.

The month of March is a time when the vegetable garden needs attention. Such a lot of work to be done! After all those summer vegetables have finished, turn all the beds over thoroughly, manure well, then plant out spinach, cabbage, and cauliflower.

Sow peas, plant out leeks, plant broad beans, broccoli, eschalots; also a sowing of white turnips, a bed of swedes, and a few onions.

Also sow more onion seed, a bed of carrots, parsnips.

Keep the salads going. Sow more lettuce, also a bed of beetroot, a little sowing of mustard cress, and endive.

Make a bed of thyme, a small bed of parsley.

Go over the whole of your vegetable garden, and see what can be done.

Market gardeners will do well to rest portion of their vegetable garden. Dig it over well, leave in the rough state, then let lie through the winter, so that when spring arrives your garden will be in the best of condition.

The main thing in successful vegetable growing is to have the garden in perfect condition. The soil must be in first-class condition, plenty of manure should be available, for heavy soil, horse manure, and for light soil, cow manure.

The garden must be kept clean. Be prepared to fight off all diseases. Keep the spray pump going, and be sure to use the right material for sprays.

Every disease needs the right material to keep in check.

Garden Originality

WHEN planting your garden, keep in mind a color-scheme. Make your garden produce just what you desire. Don't wait until spring comes and then say, "I wish I had done so and so." Think well before commencing the work—plan well. Then, when flowering time arrives, your garden will be the envy of all. Always remember to plan something unique and interesting, something different to your neighbor.

PAIN AFTER MEALS

By Dr. F. B. Scott, M.D., Paris

Of all the aches and pains which patients come and tell me about, stomach pain after meals is probably the most common. "I get such stabbing, griping pains after meals," they say, or "my meals give me such a horrible full-up feeling."

Well, it doesn't take long to put these patients right. Their trouble is excess stomach acid — burning acid which ferments in the stomach and leads to all sorts of painful symptoms. In these cases, I simply prescribe 'Bisurated' Magnesia, the standard antacid compound. Within five minutes 'Bisurated' Magnesia neutralises excess acid, and so stops all pain and discomfort. If you suffer from stomach trouble, I strongly recommend you to try 'Bisurated' Magnesia.

Note: 'Bisurated' Magnesia—referred to by Dr. Scott—is available at all chemists. The package bears the trade mark 'Bismag.'

Varicose Veins are Quickly Reduced

No sensible person will continue to suffer from dangerous swollen veins or bunches when the new, powerful, yet harmless germicide called Emerald Oil can readily be obtained at any well-stocked chemist.

Ask for a two-ounce original bottle of Emerald Oil (full strength), and refuse substitutes. Use as directed, and in a few days improvement will be noticed, then continue until the swollen veins are reduced to normal. The leading chemists are now selling lots of it, under strict guarantee of money back if not completely satisfied.

THEN . . .

An interesting example of Silver Cream Jug from the eighteenth century.

and

NOW . .

Modern style is well expressed in this Silver Cream Jug of to-day.

YOU can count on always retaining the lovely lustre of your silverware if you polish it occasionally with Silvo — a few drops on an old soft cloth and a little light rubbing quickly and gently wipe away all the dimness. Silvo will *never* injure the surface of your Silver treasures. Use Silvo too, for polishing Chromium and Glassware.

A Reckitt's Product — Made in Australia

SILVO
LIQUID SILVER POLISH

SEBATONE BANISHES DANDRUFF
and Ensures a Clean, Healthy Scalp
SEBATONE CARES FOR THE HAIR
AT ALL CHEMISTS

Free Friendly Advice on All Travel Subjects
Australian Women's Weekly
TRAVEL BUREAU
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Vita-Weat

— *that's* the bread for zest and fitness

Stop eating clogging, old-fashioned, starch-heavy foods. Change to Peek Frean Vita-Weat Crispbread—"the bread that lets your stomach travel light." None of the goodness is left out of *this* bread. It contains the *whole* grain of the best wheat.

Vita-Weat ends hot-weather sluggishness. It makes you feel fit, *be* fit.

PEEK FREAN
Vita-Weat
CRISPBREAD

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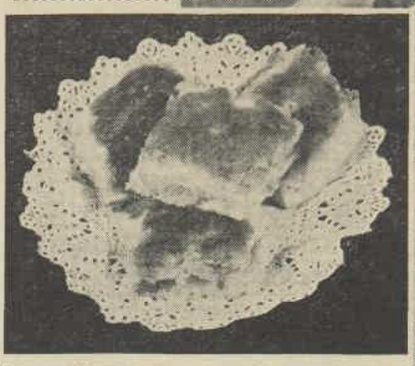
APPLE RECIPES...

Here are prize-winning entries from readers. They include soup, a salad, curry, marmalade, beer, scones and delicious sweets.

DID YOU KNOW that a tempting and very nourishing soup could be made from apples? See recipe on this page. It is thoroughly recommended by the sender.



A FEW weeks ago we asked our readers for interesting ways of using apples. Recipes are still pouring in!

Many delicious apple recipes were duplicated in this competition, but the selected few published hereunder will be treasured in every household.

Do not fail to send in your recipe for a nourishing breakfast dish containing eggs as the basic ingredient. But send it at once!

Remember, every week we award prizes for the best recipes received, including a first prize of £1.

APPLE STRUDEL

Sift 1 1-3 cups flour and ¼ teaspoon salt into a basin. Work in three tablespoons fat with a knife, until the flour is flaky. Form into a dough with 1 well-beaten egg and 3 tablespoons milk. Mix into ¼ cup butter 2 cups finely-chopped apples, ½ cup seeded raisins, ½ cup almonds (chopped), ½ cup sugar, 1 teaspoon cinnamon, ½ cup fine, dry breadcrumbs (which have been browned in a little butter.)

Turn the dough on to a lightly-floured board, roll as thinly as possible into a rectangular shape. Spread with the apple mixture and lightly press into the dough with the rolling pin. Roll the strudel up like a swiss roll. Put on a well-greased shallow dish, and bake in a moderate oven (350 deg. to 375 deg. F.) for 40 minutes. Baste twice during the baking with melted butter. Serve hot or cold, plain or with whipped cream.

TO DRY APPLES

Peel the apples, cut in quarters and core, taking care to remove the slightest blemish. Slice apples finely, place on a tray covered with clean white paper, and put in the sunshine. Allow them to stand in the sun for 3 or 4 days, following the sun around throughout the day, and turning them over frequently. When well-dried and brown, pack them into well-dried and air-tight bottles. Screw down the lids and store in a cool, dry spot.

See that the apples and bottles are well-dried before storing. These apples make delightful apple pie and tarts throughout the winter.

First Prize of £1 to Mrs. Wallace, c/o San Jose, 8 Lemnos Parade, Newcastle, N.S.W.

APPLE LIFEBUOYS

Peel as many apples as are required. Cut into full-sized slices, and punch the core out carefully, so that each slice resembles a lifebuoy.

Put into a basin 3ozs. flour and a pinch of salt. Make a well in the centre, pour in 1 tablespoon olive oil, add gradually 2 tablespoons tepid water, and mix smoothly. Beat well, let batter stand one hour, then stir in gently the whipped white of 1 egg. Dip each lifebuoy in the batter and fry in hot fat. Drain well and place on lace-paper d'oyley. Sprinkle with icing or castor sugar, and serve at once with slices of lemon and custard sauce.

GRATED APPLE PANCAKES

Peel and core 4 large apples, grate on coarse grater. Sweeten with sugar. Add 2 eggs, and stir all well together. Have pan of hot fat ready, drop in tablespoons and fry until brown. Sprinkle with castor sugar, serve hot.

These are nice unsweetened, sprinkled with pepper and salt, and served with grilled bacon, as a breakfast dish.

Consolation Prize of 2/6 to Mrs. P. Woodrow, Union Street South, Toombul, Brisbane.

APPLE SOUP

One pound apples, 3ozs. rice flour, ½oz. butter, 1 small onion, ½ teaspoon celery salt, ½lb. haricot beans, 3 pints water, pepper and salt.

Peel, core, and quarter apples. Put butter into a pan and allow to become hot. Slice onion and fry, without browning. In the butter. Add the apples, and fry all together for 10 minutes. Soak the haricot beans for 24 hours, or have them previously cooked. Add to the apples, etc., and turn all into a deep saucepan with the water. Cook for 40 minutes if the beans are previously done, otherwise cook until they are tender. Mix rice flour with a little water, and after straining the broth, add to it. Stir until thickened. If liked, the vegetables, etc., may be left in, but the other way I think is much nicer.

Consolation Prize of 2/6 to Miss Beverley Lane, Far West Health Scheme, Wentworth Street, Manly, N.S.W.

BAKED CRUSTED APPLES

Peel and core apples (five-crowns are best), allowing one for each person. Brush them over with lightly-beaten white of an egg. Then roll them carefully in the following mixture: 1 tablespoon chopped almonds, 2 tablespoons jam or honey, ½ tablespoon sugar, 1 tablespoon stale breadcrumbs or stale cake crumbs.

Bake apples in a buttered dish in a moderate oven.

Serve either hot or cold.

Consolation Prize of 2/6 to Mrs. D. Hayward, 52 East Avenue, Forestville, S.A.

UNUSUAL APPLE SCONES

Three-quarter pound flour, 1 teaspoon cream of tartar, 1 teaspoon lard, 1 teaspoon margarine, ¾ cup finely-chopped apples, parboiled, pinch salt, quarter teaspoon bicarbonate soda, 2ozs. sugar, 1½ gills milk, or milk and water mixed.

Sieve flour, salt, cream of tartar, and soda into a basin, then rub in fat until mixture has consistency of breadcrumbs. Add sugar and apples, and mix thoroughly. Mix to a stiff dough with milk, then roll on a pastryboard to half an inch thickness. Cut into shapes. Bake on a baking-sheet in a hot oven for 20 minutes.

Consolation Prize of 2/6 to Mrs. Ada Foster, 19 Flat, Washington, Musgrave St., Mosman, N.S.W.

APPLE EGGS

Chop finely 1lb. apples (cooking). Sprinkle with a tablespoon sugar and a dust of cinnamon, if liked. Add 3 tablespoons chopped almonds, 2 tablespoons fine breadcrumbs, 1 teaspoon cornflour, and 2 well-beaten eggs. Mix all thoroughly and set aside for ½ an hour, covering with a clean, damp cloth. Form into egg-shapes with 2 tablespoons, and arrange, not touching each other, in a well-buttered baking tin. Mix 2 tablespoons brown sugar with ½ teacup hot water, and when sugar is melted, pour round shapes and bake in a moderate oven for 25 minutes till nice and brown, basting occasionally. Serve cold, with custard or cream for a sweet, or on lettuce leaves with slices of lemon, as an accompaniment to cold meat or fish.

Consolation Prize of 2/6 to Mrs. H. Henderson, 199 Cooper St., Waverley, N.S.W.

APPLE COCKTAIL

Peel and core 4 dessert apples. Put into large wineglasses and with a silver knife cut them downwards into fairly thin sections, taking care that the sections do not become disarranged. Squeeze the juice of ½ lemon over the 4 apples. Spread the sections out slightly, and fill the centres with the sections of 1 orange and 1 grapefruit, which have been freed from pips and membrane.

Sprinkle with brown sugar, and cover apples with any juice that runs from the orange and grapefruit and add, if necessary, the juice of another orange. Serve very cold. For a dinner party, add a little sherry to each cocktail and decorate with cocktail cherry.

When in season other ripe fruits can be used.

Consolation Prize of 2/6 to Miss Lydie Parks, Rockiands, Romsey, Vic.

CURRIED APPLES

Wipe and core 6 cooking apples. Place in a baking-dish and pour over them 1 cup water and the juice of 1 lemon. Mix together ½ cup sugar, teaspoon curry powder, 1 teaspoon grated lemon rind. Fill centres with this mixture. Bake apples in a hot oven. Serve with ham or cold meat.

Consolation Prize of 2/6 to Mrs. C. Stewart, 13 Cameron Avenue, Artarmon, N.S.W.

APPLE MARMALADE

Six lemons, 6lb. apples (stone pippins are excellent and make a good color), 6 pints of water, 9lb. sugar.

Slice lemons thinly. Soak overnight in 6 pints boiling water. Next morning cook quickly till rinds are tender. Meanwhile, peel and cut up apples, and add to rinds when tender. Cook quickly till soft, then add sugar, and cook fairly quickly (1½ to ¾ hour.) Test after ½ hour. An easy way to peel apples with no waste is to let them stand in boiling water for a few minutes, when the skins will slip off quite easily.

Consolation Prize of 2/6 to Mrs. D. M. Phillipps, 13 Ross Street, Kew E4, Vic.

BUTTERED APPLES

Six large cooking apples, 6 slices of buttered bread, 2 tablespoons sugar, 1 tablespoon butter, 6 teaspoons jam.

Core apples, but do not peel. Prepare slices of bread the size of the apples, and place one apple on each. Mix butter and sugar and fill centres of apples with it. Place apples in a flat dish, and bake in oven till bread is golden brown, and the apples tender. When almost ready place a spoonful of jam on each, and put back in the oven for a few minutes. Serve on hot dish, pouring juice from dish over apples.

Consolation Prize of 2/6 to Mrs. Sullivan, 4 Cremorne Street, Richmond E1, Melbourne.

APPLE BEER

(Splendid Summer Drink.)

Eighteen large tart apples, 4 gallons water, 5 cups sugar, 1 cup raisins, 2 cups hop yeast, 1 finely-shredded lemon, or teaspoon essence lemon.

Boil water and sugar, raisins, finely-shredded apples and lemon.

Do not peel or core apples. Remove from fire at once, and stir occasionally till cool. Then add yeast. Let stand 24 hours. Strain and bottle. Tie down corks and put in cool place. Very much like cider to taste. The more apples one can spare, the better the flavor.

Consolation Prize of 2/6 to Mrs. L. E. Wood, 32 Mulgrave Street, Launceston.

APPLE SALAD

Six rosy apples, 6 lettuce leaves, 2 gherkins, 2 sticks celery (finely chopped), 3 tablespoons mayonnaise dressing.

Wipe apples. Cut off tops and scoop inside carefully. Remove core and scoop up removed apple finely. Mix apple with a little mayonnaise, chopped celery, and gherkin, finely chopped. Fill apple shells with this mixture and mask the tops with mayonnaise. Decorate with gherkin cut into strips and stand each apple on a lettuce leaf.

Consolation Prize of 2/6 to Mrs. S. Cobbell, Pindimar, Port Stephens, N.S.W.

APPLE BLOSSOMS

Two teacups flour, 1 teacup castor sugar, 2 eggs, 1 tablespoon butter, 2½ teaspoons baking-powder, ½ cup milk, stewed apple, desiccated coconut, cochineal and water.

Cream butter and sugar, add eggs well beaten, sift in flour and baking-powder. Then add milk, mix well. Have ready well-greased gem irons, put in spoonful of mixture, then spoonful stewed apple, then spoonful mixture. Bake in hot oven. Cool, dip very lightly in water made pink with cochineal, then roll quickly in desiccated coconut. These cakes are very nice for afternoon tea, etc.

Consolation Prize of 2/6 to Mrs. Brett Ellensen, Glen Aplin, Qld.

ABOVE: Prepare apple eggs and (at left) a plate of light, appetising apple scones. See recipes on this page.

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CHEESE *Comes to the* RESCUE

With its versatility and its goodness it gives, at little cost, additional zest to Lenten menus—to year-round menus

By
Mary Forbes
Cooking Expert to The Australian Women's Weekly

WHETHER IT'S A PARTY SNACK or formal entertainment, cheese is always welcome. Above you see pictured a most delicious supper dish called chicken sandwich supreme. Glance through the recipe given on this page—we're sure you'll not be able to resist trying it out.

BESIDES mixing with many other kinds of food, to the advantage of both, cheese is so rich in nutriment that it can be used satisfactorily to substitute the main protein dish for any meal.

It provides first-quality protein in a concentrated form, as well as Vitamin A, energy units, and a wealth of the precious minerals, calcium and phosphorus, which too often are lacking in the daily diet, and which are so necessary for building sound teeth.

It blends happily with eggs, rice, spaghetti, vegetables—and adds a relish of flavor and food value to these old stand-bys. Cheese cooking is not a difficult matter, either, contrary to general belief. With gentle cooking under low heat it will always be a success.

CHEESE AND VEGETABLE CASSEROLE

Two cups cooked spaghetti, 2 cups cooked peas, 1 chopped onion, 2 fresh tomatoes, 1 cup breadcrumbs, 1 cup shredded cheese, salt, pepper.

Place half the spaghetti in a large baking dish. Mix the peas with the chopped onion and place half on the spaghetti, following this with half the sliced tomatoes, breadcrumbs and seasonings. Repeat with remaining ingredients except cheese. Cover the dish and bake in moderate oven about ½ hour. Uncover, sprinkle with cheese and return to oven for ten minutes. Enough for six.

CREAM OF CHEESE SOUP

One onion, 2 pints milk, 1 pint white vegetable stock, 4oz. packet tasty cheese, 1 egg, pepper, salt, peppercorns, bay leaf.

Cut onion into slices and put into a saucepan with two pints of milk and one pint white stock, a few peppercorns, and the bay leaf. Bring slowly to boiling point, then leave on side of stove long enough for milk to get well flavored. Then strain. Melt two tablespoons of butter, stir in two tablespoons flour, then gradually add milk and stock, and bring to the boil. Simmer for a few minutes, then draw saucepan to side of stove, and stir in 4oz. of shredded Old English cheese and the beaten yolk of egg. Add salt and pepper and serve very hot garnished with finely-chopped parsley.

CELERY AND TURNIPS IN CHEESE SAUCE

One cup celery (diced), 1 cup turnips (diced), 3 tablespoons butter, 3 tablespoons flour, 1½ cups milk, salt, pepper, ½ cup cheddar cheese (shredded).

Cook celery and turnips together until tender. Drain. Melt butter, blend in flour and gradually add milk, stirring until thick and smooth. Season with salt and pepper to taste and add cheese. Add celery and turnips and serve. Enough for six.

DEEP FISH APPLE PIE WITH CHEESE PASTRY

Pastry, 6 green apples, dash nutmeg, dash cinnamon, 1 cup shredded cheese.

Mix pastry in usual way, adding finely shredded cheese when mixing. Put sliced apples in a deep baking dish. Add sugar. Sprinkle with nutmeg and cinnamon. Dot with butter. Cover with pastry, rolled 3-8th inch thick, and with small slits to allow steam to escape. Trim and press edge with fingers. Bake in hot oven 30 minutes, or until apples are tender.

SALMON POTATO LOAF

One tin salmon, 2 cups mashed potatoes, 1½ cups shredded cheese, 1 small onion, chopped, ½ cup milk, 1 egg (beaten), salt, pepper.

Remove bones and flake the salmon. Add remaining ingredients, seasoning it well. Bake in a buttered loaf-pan, in a moderate oven, about 40 minutes, or until firm. Unmould on a platter and slice. Enough for six.

CHEESE AND RICE SOUFFLE

Three eggs, 2 cups medium white sauce, 1 cup cooked rice, ½lb. packet tasty cheese, shredded, 1 teaspoon salt, 1 teaspoon chilli sauce.

Add the well-beaten egg-yolks to 2 cups white sauce; add cooked rice which has been thoroughly drained. Add one teaspoon salt and the chilli sauce. Fold in the shredded cheese and stiffly-beaten egg-whites. Pour into a greased baking dish and bake in a slow oven.

CHEESE SAUCE

Eight-ounce packet cheese, 1-3rd cup milk.

An admirable cheese sauce not only covers a multitude of dietetic sins—but has the ability to glorify many simple foods which would otherwise be undistinguished. Contrary to general opinion, the perfect cheese sauce, smooth and golden, is quite simple to prepare. It will lend distinction to whatever dish it adorns.

Shred the cheese and melt slowly at top of double boiler, adding milk from time to time, and stirring slowly until smooth.

CHICKEN SANDWICH SUPREME

One cup diced ham, ½ cup butter, 1 cup diced, cooked chicken, ½ cup cream, ½ cup white sauce, 12 slices toast, 8oz. packet tasty cheese, salt, pepper.

Cook the ham in the butter. Add diced chicken and cream. Cook very slowly three minutes. Add white sauce and seasoning, cook slowly for another minute. Add beaten egg-yolks. Cook, stirring constantly until thickened. Cover slice of buttered toast with chicken and ham mixture, add second slice of toast, and cover with slice of cheese.

Place under low griller or in moderate oven until cheese is melted. Serve with garnish of lettuce, sliced tomato and stuffed olives. Enough for six sandwiches.

CHEESE RING MOULD

One and a half cups shredded raw carrots, 1 tablespoon chopped onion, 1 cup cooked rice, 1 beaten egg, 1 cup shredded cheese, 1½ cups cooked peas, 3 tablespoons butter, salt, pepper.

Cook the carrots for 5 minutes in boiling salted water; drain well. Mix with onion, rice, egg, cheese and seasonings. Pour into the well-buttered ring mould or casserole and bake in a moderate oven, 350 degrees, until firm. Unmould, and fill the centre with the peas which have been thoroughly drained and heated in the butter.

MACARONI MOUSSE

One cup macaroni broken into two-inch pieces, 1½ cups hot milk, 1 cup soft breadcrumbs, ½ cup melted butter, 1 tablespoon chopped parsley, 1 tablespoon chopped onion, 1½ cups shredded cheese, 3-8th teaspoon salt, 1-8th teaspoon pepper, 3 eggs.

Cook macaroni in boiling salted water, blanch in cold water, and drain. Pour the hot milk over the breadcrumbs, add the butter, parsley, onion, shredded cheese and seasonings. Then add the well-beaten eggs. Put the macaroni in a thickly-buttered loaf-pan or casserole, and pour the milk with cheese mixture over it. Bake about 50 minutes in a slow oven, or until loaf is firm and will hold its shape when turned out on a platter. Enough for six servings.

STUFFED ONIONS

Six large onions, 4oz. packet shredded strong cheese, 1 cup thick sour cream, ½ teaspoon salt, 1 tablespoon capers.

Peel onions and cook until tender, but not too soft. Drain and cool. Scoop out centres and chop finely. Mix with cheese, sour cream, and salt. Refill onion shells and place in greased casserole. Place any remaining filling around onions. Sprinkle capers over onions. Bake in hot oven about 15 to 20 minutes or until lightly browned. Serve at once. Enough for six.

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Revenge at Nightfall

By ELLIOT BAILEY

Complete Book-length Novel

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REVENGE AT NIGHTFALL

By ELLIOT BAILEY

IN the sunny brightness of an April morning, the Misses Amelia and Patience Cartwright proceeded down the one and only street of Brimley Parva.

The two women were well known in the village—that modern miracle, a still unspoiled hamlet some twenty miles from London—for they had lived there all their lives, Amelia the elder, tall, gaunt and angular, with mannish features, and a jutting nose—a bit "queer," people said, and getting queerer. Patience, of smaller, gentler mould and completely under the domination of her sister.

Their progress through the village was a silent one. One of Amelia's periodical moods of morose silence was upon her and Patience knew better than to break it. Not until they were in their own cottage on the outskirts did Amelia address her sister, a curious expression in her deep-set, flickering eyes.

"Patience," she announced, "yesterday I was over at Homer's farm. They have a kitten there they wish to dispose of. I have arranged to take it. It will fill the place of Tibbles, who died last week."

The younger sister turned upon her a mild and yet shocked gaze. The cat they had lost had been her abiding joy in life, and she had taken its demise bitterly to heart.

"Nothing," she declared, "can ever fill the place of Tibbles. I cannot, Amelia, understand your even suggesting such a thing."

The elder's deep tones grew deeper. "This cat," she answered, "if we do not take it, is to be destroyed. When I heard that I knew that you would agree at once. In any case, the matter is settled. I arranged with Homer that you would fetch it from the farm at nine o'clock this evening."

Immediately the younger's weak countenance registered fresh dismay.

"Nine o'clock!" she echoed. "But it will be dark then, and all across those fields . . . A girl was killed in them once."

"What of, it?" was the rough retort. "That was a girl, and who's going to worry about an old thing like you in the dark, I'd like to know?"

"B-but couldn't it have been got earlier? Couldn't you have brought it back with you?"

"No, I couldn't. It's at the vet's if you must know, but it'll be ready at nine."

Patience shivered.

"Very well, Amelia," she acquiesced.

Into the dark eyes watching her there flashed an odd expression. It might have signified much or little, for peculiar expressions were wont to flicker these days in Amelia Cartwright's eyes. Patience, in any case, did not see it. She was taking her place dejectedly at the luncheon table.

After lunch Amelia retired to her room, where it was an understood thing that she rested until three o'clock. But this afternoon, at any rate, she did not rest.

Instead, she went down on her knees and unlocked a trunk standing in a corner of the room, a trunk which when the lid was lifted revealed a number of unexpected things.

Lifting out a parcel carefully wrapped in brown paper, she laid it on the bed. There, with fingers that trembled slightly, she started to unwrap it.

Inside was a man's dark grey suit, and ten minutes later, wearing it, a man's cap pulled down over her grey hair, Amelia Cartwright with her hard, large features was to the casual eye a man.

With a grin of satisfaction she surveyed herself in the glass. Tall and angular for a woman, she became no more than medium height and slim with her apparent change of sex.

Posing and strutting, she wore the suit until teatime. Then she put it back in the trunk, and changing into conventional garments went down to that meal her customary austere self. She sniffed audibly when she observed her sister's red eyes. It was evident that Patience had been weeping most of the afternoon.

Their frugal dinner came at seven, and at eight-thirty the daily maid, having washed up the few dishes, took her departure. Amelia looked meaningly at the clock.

"You've not forgotten, Patience, that you have to fetch the cat?"

Patience hadn't forgotten, but all the evening she had been desperately hoping that by some miracle Amelia would.

Slowly and reluctantly, as if giving Amelia the chance to relent, she rose to her feet and went upstairs to put on her hat and jacket. But there was no relenting in the elder's grim countenance. She sat motionless, a strained air of expectancy about her, until she heard the front door close behind her sister's departing form.

Then she became busy, oddly busy. Tearing upstairs, she returned in an incredibly short time dressed in her man's dark suit and cap. A careful survey of the empty roadway seemed to satisfy her, and she slipped out into the darkness and hurried away in the same direction as her sister.

PATIENCE, meanwhile, her terror increasing with every unwilling step she took, had reached the edge of the fields that stretched away to Homer's farm.

At the stile leading to the first two fields she stood irresolute, her hand at her throat.

"I can't do it, I can't," she moaned. "Oh, why is Amelia always so inconsiderate? She knows how terrified I am of the dark. I don't want the cat either, I don't. It will never be the same as poor dear Tibbles."

Torn desperately between two fears—of going on or going back—she asked herself dolefully what she was to do.

The fancy that she heard footsteps approaching along the lampless country road brought her to a decision. Scrambling over the stile she hurried forward almost at a run across the field.

She reached a second stile breathless and spent and with the knowledge weighing upon her that she could go no farther, come what might. Like a desert of blackness, the fields stretched round her, a desert which had engulfed her and would never let her go.

Ahead, the farmhouse lights, obscured now by trees, were just a mocking glimmer of the sanctuary that might have been. A night bird's eerie cry voiced the expression of her own voiceless dread.

Then once again she heard them, footsteps which rustled through the grass, and, she realised now, had followed her all along the route. Close to her a man's figure materialised and swiftly and silently drew towards her.

Something told her that he meant her ill, that there at last was the peril she had always vaguely apprehended descending upon her out of the darkness. Yet, her limbs like lead, her throat dry, she found herself unable either to run or shout for help. Sensing her fate, she awaited it with a terror beyond all sound or movement.

Mercifully, she had not to wait long. Without a word the figure came close to her, dropped a noose over her head and pulled it tight. She gave a tiny choking cry and that was all.

The killer lowered Patience Cartwright to the ground, loosened the noose, and, climbing the stile melted into the darkness his victim had so justly feared.

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REVENGE AT NIGHTFALL

Twenty minutes later her face set and expressionless, Amelia Cartwright let herself into the house. Going upstairs, she took off her man's clothing, and relocked it in the trunk.

Then she sat down to await the arrival of the body she felt sure in due course would be brought home.

"THAT there Miss Cartwright be late a-coming for her cat."

Farmer Homer, one of the old sort who tilled his own land and by frugal living and a stern avoidance of the enticements of neighboring London, wrenched from it a modest competence for himself and wife, glanced across at the grandfather clock in the corner of the kitchen as he spoke.

"You're right, John," his wife, a round little body knitting busily on the other side of the hearth, agreed. "She was to be here at nine, and 'tis now ten past. Maybe she won't be coming at all."

"Maybe not," he acquiesced.

The knitting needles clicked a little more vigorously and a frown stamped itself on Maggie Homer's good-natured face.

"I hope she doesn't, John. Why couldn't that there Miss Amelia have taken the cat away herself? 'Twas ready for her and all. But no, 'I'll send Miss Patience for it,' she says, high and haughty-like. Too grand to carry it herself, if you ask me. And why send the poor thing over for it at night, and she so frightened of the dark, as everyone knows? 'Tain't right, John, the way that woman domineers over poor Miss Patience, and has done for many a year. 'Tain't right and it shouldn't be allowed."

John Homer took his pipe from his grey-bearded mouth and eyed his apple-cheeked wife with surprise.

"Why, Maggie, 'tain't like you to get all worked up like that. Seems to me as you don't like Miss Amelia."

"I don't, and that's a fact," was the frank reply. "A dark, deep woman, Miss Amelia Cartwright, if you ask me. Cruel, too; you can tell that from the way she tyrannises over her sister. I shouldn't wonder if she didn't hate Miss Patience."

John knocked out his pipe. "Nonsense, Maggie, don't you be getting ideas like that in your head. Maybe those two sisters don't get on—they won't be the first if they don't. There's generally one as is stronger-minded than the other, and in this case it's Miss Amelia. Miss Patience should stand up for herself."

Maggie laughed. "That poor thing against Miss Amelia. Oh, you men, John, how little you see. But I can't bear to think of her alone in those fields, and I was going to suggest . . ."

John rose to his feet. "I know. I'll take the cat and go and meet her."

Maggie regarded him with affection.

"Good lad," she observed. "I was hoping you would."

"Not," he went on, "as there's anything for her to worry about in them fields if she does come across them. The only folks as uses them at night is courting couples, and not many of them since that chap did in his girl a few years ago."

His wife made a little gesture of distaste.

While he put on his coat she bustled off, returning presently with a kitten, a small bundle of greyish fur.

"I'll put it in the wicker-topped basket, John; it'll be easier to carry."

A moment or two later John Homer sallied forth, his mewing burden on his arm. As he strode across the first field he could see nothing of Patience Cartwright and resigned himself to doing the whole distance to her house.

And so he came to the stile which divided the two fields. He was just clambering over this and, so to speak, in mid-air, when something attracted his attention the other side which nearly made him drop the basket and himself fall with it to the ground. Next instant he was on his knees, examining by the light of a match the limp form and terrible features of Patience Cartwright.

"Good Lord!" he whispered; "this is murder."

THE match burned down, singeing his fingers, but the only notice he took was to throw it away and strike another. Then he rose to his feet and his stentorian voice echoed across the fields.

Twice, three times, he called, but there came no answering hail. If anyone heard him, they decided to mind their own business and did not reply. He gazed down at the body at his feet.

"Oughtn't to be moved, by rights," he muttered, "but I can't leave the poor thing lying here. Kitty, I'm afraid you'll have to stay."

Stooping, he raised the corpse in his arms, his powerful frame making light of its weight in spite of his years, and set out for the village.

Not a soul did he meet in its darkened street and although he passed the doctor's he did not turn in there. What he carried he knew to be beyond the aid of human skill. This was a police matter, and to the little dwelling-house that was the police station he made his way, kicking the door to gain admittance when he reached it.

P.C. Chubb, Brimley Parva's one and only constable, himself opened it, stepping back in awed astonishment when he saw what was in the farmer's arms.

"Miss Cartwright—Patience Cartwright," Homer told him; "found her lying in my fields—someone's done her in. Don't let your missus see her."

The warning came too late, though nothing would have prevented Eliza Chubb seeing anything she had a mind to see. She pushed forward now in eager curiosity.

And as she did so her expression changed. Horror and incredulity were blended in it, and also in her voice, combined with a great pity.

"Oh, the poor woman, the poor, poor woman. Henry, she must lie upon our bed."

And there they laid her while Chubb telephoned, first of all to Dr. Bathurst, whose house Homer had not thought it worth while to call at, and then to Superintendent Cross at the neighboring town of Franchester. The latter groaned, for after a couple of sleepless nights on duty for a reason that will appear later, he had been looking forward to a good rest. He said, nevertheless, that he would motor over at once.

Bathurst, of course, arrived first. One glance at what lay upon the bed made him purse up his lips and shake his head.

"Strangled," he said presently, "by a cord or something of the kind; you can see the mark of it around her neck. She must have died at once, of shock probably as much as anything else. No doubt Forbes, the police surgeon, will be over soon, but he'll agree with what I say."

The sound of a klaxon and the jar of brakes signified the arrival of the police from Franchester, and Cross, followed by a sergeant and Forbes, the doctor, squeezed into the little room, from which Mrs. Chubb had now withdrawn. The superintendent, a tall man with a slight stoop and a somewhat melancholy cast of countenance, at first expressed anger at the body's removal from the field, but on hearing the circumstances became mollified.

"Well, doctor?" he asked, as Forbes concluded his examination.

The latter's diagnosis agreed with what Bathurst had already stated.

"Strangled," he said shortly. "Considerable force must have been exerted—her neck's broken."

The superintendent nodded. "Thought as much," he muttered. "Well, murder being admitted, it remains for me to get busy while you medical gentlemen are discussing the disposal of the body—I'll leave Chubb to help you. You, Mr. Homer, had better come with Sergeant Kershaw and my man outside to the place where you found her."

The farmer expressed his agreement. "Someone," he reminded them, "will have to tell her sister."

Bathurst swung round. "You're right," he exclaimed. "I'd forgotten that. It'll be a terrible shock for her—they've been together for so many years. I'll ask my wife to take on that unpleasant task."

UPRIGHT and motionless, Amelia Cartwright sat waiting for the tramp of feet, the clamor of voices which would denote that they were bringing Patience home. That, if found, she might be taken elsewhere, did not occur to her. If not found—well, she was prepared to wait all night.

Ten struck, ten long strokes, every one of which she counted, when there came a ring at the front door so unexpected that she started. Long before the door was reached, she expected to have warning. But perhaps they had arrived on tiptoe, all voices hushed.

With a glance in the mirror as she passed it, she stalked towards the door, her mien that of a tragedy queen. Opening it, she admitted—Mrs. Bathurst.

Again this was so unlooked-for that to a certain extent she lost her poise.

She strove to recover herself, to be natural. "Good evening," she said, in her deep tones. "What brings you here at so late an hour?"

Mrs. Bathurst, one of those ordinary nice little women who make so small a mark upon the world and yet achieve so much towards its smooth running, in everyday life at any rate, was plainly nervous. Only a sense of duty, in fact, had induced her to come. She did not care for Amelia Cartwright, had always regarded her as a trifle uncanny, and plainly disliked her errand.

"I am afraid," she said, "that I have bad news for you, Miss Cartwright. You must prepare yourself for a shock. May I come in?"

The other turned and led the way to the room in which she had been sitting. If it was bad news, she reflected, it must be about Patience. But how on earth did this woman know?

Motioning her visitor to sit, she did so herself, once more gaunt, formidable, and expressionless.

"Well," she inquired, "what is this news you speak of?"

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Mrs. Bathurst regarded her unhappily. "It's about Patience," she faltered. I'm afraid she's—dead."

"Yes," said Amelia Cartwright.

It was an answer that threw the doctor's wife right out of her stride. She stared at the grim visage opposite with its set lips, gleaming and yet expressionless eyes, and floundered on.

"I don't think you understand. She was found lying in a field; they fear—murdered."

"Yes," said Amelia Cartwright.

Mrs. Bathurst's eyes opened wide.

"You mean—you knew?"

She said afterwards that she felt sure Amelia was on the point of saying "Yes" again. Then for the first time those basilisk eyes changed their expression, became sly, wary.

"I did not know, but I have been fearing something was wrong. She was so long overdue. She always said that one day something would leap on her out of the dark. She went over to Homer's farm to fetch a cat."

"She never reached the farm, poor dear. Mr. Homer found her half-way there himself. She had been—don't you want to know how she was killed?"

The strange face opposite twisted into the semblance of a smile.

"When one is dead the cause doesn't greatly matter."

Mrs. Bathurst was shocked. Fearing a scene, hysterics even, this extraordinary indifference was beyond her understanding. She rose to her feet, prepared to go.

"Your sister, Miss Cartwright, was strangled. I am deeply grieved. You apparently are not. I will wish you good evening."

"Good evening," replied Miss Cartwright in her deep tones. "Will they be bringing her back here?"

"Not to-night. They wish to make a further examination."

Then her sympathetic nature reasserted itself, and she spoke more gently.

"I am very sorry for you, Miss Cartwright. You're sure there's nothing I can do?"

"No," Amelia returned composedly. "I shall go to bed."

"Didn't turn a hair," the indignant Mrs. Bathurst told her husband later. "You'd have thought her sister didn't mean anything at all to her, and I thought she would be prostrated."

The doctor stroked his chin.

"She's a queer woman, my dear. She'll probably feel it more later on. And now forget about it and go to sleep yourself."

Amelia, meanwhile, was on her knees beside the trunk she kept locked in her room.

And she was smiling.

"THIS be the place, Mr. Superintendent."

Cross, with Sergeant Kershaw and John Homer, had left his car in charge of the constable driving it and cut across the fields to the stile.

After getting Homer to describe as minutely as possible the position in which he had found the body, the two police officers turned their flashlights upon the spot and proceeded to examine it inch by inch. Nothing very tangible rewarded their efforts.

The ground, without being really soft, was not hard, and what they took to be the impress of Patience Cartwright's heels was visible along the narrow pathway which generations of walkers had worn across the field. Beyond the stile was no sign of them, as Cross himself ascertained.

"She didn't pass that," he asserted. "The murderer must have been waiting for her at the stile."

"I'm not so sure, sir," Kershaw objected. "Seems to me there's other footmarks mixed up with hers, covering hers in some cases. Looks to me as if someone followed her along this path and caught up with her at the stile, someone wearing rather larger, but still small, shoes, rubber-soled I should say, and without heels."

"Black or brown?" Cross snapped. "Don't be afraid to go into details, Sergeant."

"If you come here, sir," said Kershaw quietly, "you'll see what I mean."

The superintendent did so, and became plainly impressed. Whatever his faults, he was not afraid to confess himself in the wrong or that a subordinate was right.

"Bully for you, Kershaw," he admitted. "Now, is this second footmark that of a man or woman, do you think?"

"Might be either, sir; big for a woman, small for a man. From the nature of the crime I think we can assume a man. A woman wouldn't have the strength."

"H'm," the superintendent demurred. "I'm not so sure. Wonderful the strength some women have—I've seen a virago almost master a hefty constable before now—and almost anyone could have mastered this Cartwright woman, if what one hears is true."

"That's right," John Homer corroborated, "they could. Like as not she'd be half-dead with fright before they touched her, that nervous she was."

"So there you are," Cross went on, not ill-pleased at getting back on Kershaw. "It doesn't do to be too dogmatic in these cases, Sergeant."

"No, sir," Kershaw agreed with mock humility, though he smiled to himself under cover of the darkness.

It fell to him, nevertheless, to make the next find. Still sweeping the ground with his torch, he had strayed away from the path.

"Look, sir," he called, "here are the marks of those heels again." Then, not to be outdone in generosity, he continued: "Rather bears out your theory after all, sir, this. Seems to have seen something at the stile which frightened her and made her run over here. Funny though, those other footmarks don't seem to have followed her."

"Why should they?" Cross demanded. "She had to get over that stile, hadn't she? No doubt she plucked up courage and returned, and the killer went for her then. Anyway," he added irritably, "it's no good trying to deduce too much from these footprints. Someone may have come along after Mr. Homer carried her away, and in any case there are his and yours and mine all over the place. Now what do you think you've found?"

The question was caused by Kershaw suddenly stooping to pick up something out of the grass.

"A packet of chocolates," he observed, handing them over to his superior officer. "Tumbled out of her bag most likely."

"Possibly," Cross agreed, slipping them into his pocket. "That is if they belonged to her at all. They don't seem to help us particularly all the same."

For another ten minutes they continued searching without result, and then the superintendent straightened up.

"We're doing no good here," he declared. "We'd better have a look at the place early in the morning. No doubt Mr. Homer won't be sorry to get back home."

The farmer, who had been standing quietly by, picked up the basket containing the kitten.

"Reckon as my old woman'll be wondering where I've got to," he observed, "and it'll be a shock to her when I tell her what I found. Poor Miss Patience, I——"

He broke off, aware that the others were paying no attention although they were standing quite still in the attitude of listeners. Behind the high hedge in the farther field came the swish of footsteps through the grass. Someone was humming under their breath as they walked along. A dim figure clambered over the stile, and, limping a little, came towards them. Then, as if catching sight of them for the first time, it stopped dead.

"AND who," the superintendent asked stolidly, "may you be?"

For an instant or two the little man addressed made no reply. He seemed to be savoring the interest his appearance had undoubtedly caused.

"My name," he said at last in rather high-pitched tones, "is Sydney Kerle."

"Then, Mr. Kerle," the superintendent began, only to check himself abruptly.

"Sydney Kerle," he repeated. "D'you mean to say that you're the Sydney Kerle, the chap who was mixed up in those Risefield murders?"

"I'm afraid," the newcomer admitted, "that I am. You see, I got a bit notorious over that affair, and settled down in Brimley Parva a few weeks ago for the sake of peace and quietness. I'm beginning to wonder if I'm going to find them."

Without apology Cross flashed an electric pocket lamp on the speaker and studied him in its beam. It showed him a small sallow man of early middle age whose eyes seemed to glint sardonically behind their glasses. His limping gait when he moved showed that he was lame, the result of a Rugby football accident some years before.

The superintendent turned off the light.

"You look the part," he admitted, "although I wasn't aware you'd settled down in Brimley Parva. What, if I may ask you, did you mean when you said you doubted whether you would find peace and quietness?"

They heard the other chuckle. "Well," he remarked, "it's fairly obvious, isn't it? I tumble up against a bunch of police at night discussing a murder, so naturally——"

"How do you know we're discussing a murder?" Cross demanded.

"From listening behind the hedge," was the unblushing reply.

"You're out very late, Mr. Kerle. Is it another of your habits to stroll about the countryside at night?"

"You bet it is." Kerle returned cheerfully. "The super at Risefield could tell you that."

Cross frowned. Kerle's demeanor both angered and puzzled him—as it had done more than one policeman before him.

"Then," he snapped, "perhaps you can tell me whether you saw anything unusual?"

"The corpse?" Kerle broke in; "the murderer? That's the first intelligent question you've asked me up to now. Unfortunately, I haven't set eyes on either. Who is the victim, by the way?"

But the superintendent had had enough. Without vouchsafing a reply, he gruffly told Homer that he could go home and then set off with Kershaw towards his car. On the way he turned and looked behind him, but Sydney Kerle was no longer in sight.

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"I'M sorry, Cross, but with all this strike trouble you've as much, or more, than you can manage. You can't possibly devote sufficient time to this Brimley Parva business, so I've decided to call in Scotland Yard."

Major Clarence Tate, Chief Constable of the county, a short dark man of forty-five, spoke with decision.

"Very well, sir," Cross said stiffly, "it's for you to determine."

To do him justice, it was not to the Yard's imminent advent that he chiefly objected—he was well aware that his hands were full with the strike that had broken out at the tin-plate works which formed Franchester's principal industry—but to the presence at this discussion of Mr. Sydney Kerle.

Concerning which, no one had been more surprised to find himself there than Kerle.

On the morning after Patience Cartwright's death a car had drawn up outside Kerle's cottage, where he lived alone and a note from the Chief Constable had been delivered to him asking him, if convenient, to call and see him at Franchester police station. Kerle had got into the car and had been driven over at once.

Tate received him cordially. "We've not met before, Mr. Kerle," he said, "but hearing from Superintendent Cross that you were living at Brimley Parva I felt I should like to make your acquaintance. You're a bit of a celebrity among the police just now, you know."

Cross ground his teeth at this. His reference to Kerle as a matter of fact had been disparaging, but the Chief Constable had ignored this.

It further angered him when the Chief Constable began to ask Kerle's advice.

"What's your idea about this Patience Cartwright business? You know the details, I suppose?"

"Only a general outline. P.C. Chubb was not exactly communicative when I tried to pump him."

"Told him to keep his mouth shut," the superintendent growled.

"Quite right, too," Tate observed blandly, and then from Cross's point of view proceeded to negative this attitude by giving Kerle a succinct account of the finding of the body.

"It's a devil of a case," he concluded. "I know those two women fairly well. Can't say I care for Amelia, but Patience was a harmless old thing, and the fellow who did it must have been a maniac. Trouble is he'll probably try it on again, and quite frankly I doubt whether Cross or I are the best people to tackle him—we've rusticated here too long—so I've made up my mind to apply for the assistance of the Yard.

"As it happens, I know Sir Henry Talent, Assistant-Commissioner of the C.I.D.—went to school with him as a matter of fact—and naturally he'll send us down a good man. But I thought you might like to suggest someone—that fellow you worked with before perhaps. I forget his name."

"Detective-Inspector Geoffrey Fraser," Kerle informed him. "Ask for him, sir, and you'll have one of the best."

Tate lifted the receiver of his telephone "Whitehall 1212," he snapped.

That same afternoon, a youngish, well-set-up man, with more of the soldier about him than the policeman, walked into police headquarters at Franchester. His clipped moustache, tanned regular features and well-cut tweeds, gave him the aspect of an officer in mufti, and the Chief Constable's voice was cordial as he shook hands.

"Good afternoon, Mr. Fraser. It is good of you to be so prompt. This is Superintendent Cross, who will, I know, be glad of your assistance."

Cross uttered a non-committal grunt. He was summing Fraser up, and the points about him that had pleased the Chief Constable he found displeasing.

"La-di-da-looking fellow," he reflected. "Went to Sandhurst once, I believe, or some rot like that."

In this he was correct, as those who have met Fraser before will know.

He in his turn unostentatiously docketed his impressions of the superintendent.

"Quite a good fellow, I should say," he thought, "but a trifle pigheaded, and not at all pleased about my being called in. Will want tactful handling."

From which meditation he was recalled by Tate speaking again. He gave Fraser full details concerning the discovery of Patience Cartwright's body, and finished with a shrug of his shoulders.

"NOW," he declared, "you know as much as we do. There doesn't seem to be the slightest clue at present to the murderer, or whether he comes from this locality or from outside. What's going to be your first step, Inspector?"

"First of all, sir, I'd like to drive over to Brimley Parva—I understand it's only about five miles. I've got my own car outside with Detective-Sergeant Barnes in it, and perhaps the superintendent will be good enough to send someone over with us who can show us the ropes."

The Chief Constable answered for Cross. "Certainly," he agreed. "There'll be no difficulty about that. By the way, you'll meet an old friend of yours in Brimley Parva—Mr. Sydney Kerle. The superintendent doesn't care for him, I'm afraid."

"I don't, and that's a fact, from what I've seen of him," Cross said frankly. "I hope we're not going to get amateurs dragged into this affair."

"So that's where the shoe pinches, is it?" Fraser muttered to himself.

"He's a queer fellow," he admitted with a disarming smile. "It took me a long time to get accustomed to him myself. And now, sir, if you don't mind, I'd better be off."

With Sergeant Kershaw by his side and his own colleague Barnes behind, he drove on to Brimley Parva. Just before the bend of the road that would take them into the village Kershaw signalled to him to stop.

"This is where we leave the car," he stated, "and take to the fields."

To Fraser's satisfaction the spot was out of sight of the village, nor was anyone about when he and Kershaw reached the limit of Patience Cartwright's last earthly walk. The exact whereabouts of this was not generally known, as all concerned had held their tongues, and would not be known until the inquest next day.

The villagers in fact had been inclined to shun the ill-omened fields rather than to gather there in morbid throngs, although signs were not wanting that a good many feet had passed along the path since the murder. The footprints which Cross and Kershaw had identified as most probably those of Patience and her pursuer were now almost obliterated, as Fraser had fully expected would be the case.

Nevertheless, he got Kershaw to explain fully what they had done and the conclusions they had come to, especially with regard to the theory that Patience had strayed from the pathway into the field and then again approached the stile. The footmarks which had given rise to this idea were still fairly distinct and untrodden, and the Scotland Yard man stared down upon them in reflective fashion.

"Can you," he asked, "still point out any footprints on the path which you associate with the murdered woman?"

"Yes," the sergeant answered promptly. "I can. I particularly noticed a couple which have not been trampled on just now. Here they are."

Fraser glanced at them for a moment. Then he stooped down, whipped a tape measure from his pocket, and measured them carefully. Returning to those farther out in the field, he went through a similar procedure.

"Well," Kershaw asked him as he straightened up; "the same, aren't they?"

Fraser shook his head.

"No," he said quietly, "these are a size larger than those on the path. If you are right about those others, it wasn't Patience Cartwright who stood here."

Kershaw whistled softly.

"You've put it across us there, Inspector," he admitted. "They looked just like those on the path and I'm afraid we assumed they were. You'll be finding another of those chocolates next."

"Chocolates? What chocolates?"

Neither Tate nor Cross had mentioned Kershaw's find—the former because he had not heard of it, Cross because he did not think it worth while. Kershaw now remedied the omission.

"What happened to them?" Fraser asked.

The sergeant grinned.

"The super's got them, I expect, unless he's eaten them already. He's a sweet tooth in his head, has Mr. Cross. But if he hasn't, I doubt if you'll find them much of a clue."

"Probably not," Fraser agreed. All the same he made a mental note to ask Cross about them when next they met.

"Thanks, Sergeant Kershaw," he went on, "that's about all we can do here now—I just wanted to get the lie of the land. Barnes can drive you back to Franchester while I look up Mr. Kerle. What's the name of his house, by the way?"

"Rose Cottage—just through the village and down a lane to the left."

Fraser, after the departure of the two sergeants, soon found the cottage and was welcomed by Kerle with as much enthusiasm as that sardonic individual ever showed. Five minutes later they were deep in discussion over the murder of the night before.

SUPERINTENDENT CROSS, who was a non-smoker, which probably accounted for his "sweet tooth," was peeved. He usually kept a tin of fruit drops handy, but had just discoverd that it was empty, and he did not feel at all inclined to sally forth into the drizzling evening to buy some more. Then his face cleared. He recalled the small packet of chocolates which had been picked up near the scene of Patience Cartwright's murder, and which, not seeing that they could shed any light on the mystery, he had brought home as a peace offering to his wife. They were still in his

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overcoat pocket which was hanging in the hall.

Something of an epicure where chocolates were concerned, he observed with pleasure that the quarter-pound cardboard container held two or three violet creams—large chocolates with a portion of preserved violet stuck on top. These Cross considered an especial delicacy, and without more ado he popped one into his mouth. Then hearing Mrs. Cross coming downstairs and having no intention of handing the packet over to her, he slipped it into his pocket.

Some time later Superintendent Cross developed all the symptoms, plus some others, of a severe bilious attack. So bad was he that his wife insisted on his going to bed, and sent for Doctor Forbes.

"What have you been eating?" the doctor demanded after attending to the patient.

"Nothing in particular," was the rueful reply. "Just the ordinary meals."

"Nothing else?"

"No; oh, well, now I come to think of it, I did eat a chocolate. Only one though, not enough surely to give me an attack like this, though I remember it did strike me as tasting a bit queer—stale or something."

"Ah; got any more of them?"

"Yes; you'll find the box in my jacket pocket hanging on the chair over there. But one chocolate wouldn't make me bilious?"

"That's for me to say," the doctor snapped.

Diving his hand into the jacket pocket, he pulled out the packet of chocolates and regarded it grimly.

"I'll take it with me," he announced. "You'll be all right for a bit. I'll come back later."

Pausing only to give Mrs. Cross some directions regarding the patient and to reassure her as to his return, Forbes carried the chocolates to his surgery. There he subjected the whole dozen or so to minute scrutiny under a powerful glass.

Whereupon, carefully and methodically, he applied certain tests to every chocolate in the box, and then sat back, the straight line of his mouth grimmer still.

"I suspected as much—arsenic in both these violet creams and doubtless in the one that Cross ate. Fortunately, very far from a lethal dose; the work, I should say, of an amateur uncertain of his quantities. All the same, I think we'll present it as an additional conundrum to our friend from Scotland Yard."

THE inquest on Patience Cartwright, postponed for a couple of days to allow Superintendent Cross to recover from his indisposition, resulted in the inevitable verdict of murder against some person or persons unknown, the Coroner expressing the hope that the police would speedily bring the miscreant or miscreants to justice.

Nothing came out at the inquest concerning Cross' illness. Fathers of families placed a taboo on the fields for any of their womenkind after dusk, and Detective-Inspector Geoffrey Fraser settled down to the first steps of what he suspected might prove a long and difficult investigation.

In a case where so few real clues presented themselves it struck him that to trace the ownership of the box of poisoned chocolates might open up a useful avenue of approach to the main problem.

The Franchester police had already descended on the vendor, Mrs. Weston, whose name was printed on the cardboard container. She proved to be a respectable woman with a small sweetshop in a back street, and the seizure of her stock of unboxed chocolates for the purpose of ascertaining that there were no more poisoned ones among them filled her with the utmost consternation, especially as the police would give her no specific reason for the raid.

Fraser's later advent, therefore, and his statement that he also was acting for the police, made her look at him askance.

"I don't know what things are coming to," she said tartly. "Thirty years I've been here and never had the police in my shop before, except off duty like when they've come in to buy a few penn'orth of sweets for the kids. And now they swoop down as if it was one of those fast night clubs in London and carry off my stock without so much as by your leave.

FRASER put on his most disarming manner in view of the good soul's indignation.

"It must have been most trying and annoying for you, Mrs. Weston," he agreed, "but there's a special reason for the police's action which cannot be explained to you at present. You're really assisting justice, and must regard it in that light. No doubt, too, when certain investigations are finished, you can expect adequate compensation for any loss of stock involved."

Mrs. Weston, stout and motherly, brightened at once.

"I'm sure it's very nice to hear that," she said. "You put it in a way I didn't understand before. Jane Weston's always ready to help anyone if she can, so what can I do for you, young man?"

"A very simple service," Fraser replied promptly.

"Tell me, if you can, to whom you sold this cardboard container. It had chocolates in it, by the way."

She regarded it doubtfully for a moment, but at the word "chocolates" her face cleared.

"That's easy," she remarked, "especially now I come to look at it more closely. Most of my customers don't trouble about them there cardboard boxes—a paper bag's good enough for them—but this was rather a special sale, as you might say. 'I wants a quarter-pound of chocolates,' the lady says, and 'Haven't you got a cardboard box?' when I puts them up in paper, a quarter-pound not being such a large order when all's said and done. 'Lor, bless you, mum,' I says, 'I don't know as I have,' but then I looks and find this identical one. 'A bit dirty, mum, on one side,' I says, as you can see, sir, but 'that don't matter,' she says haughty and impatient-like. So I puts the chocolates in the box and off she goes. And it's not often I sees the likes of her in this little shop of mine. 'Tisn't a shop the quality chooses as a rule, as I don't mind admitting. And glad I've been, young man, to tell you what you wanted to know."

Fraser smiled.

"But you haven't yet," he pointed out patiently. "You didn't tell me who this customer was."

Mrs. Weston laughed in frank amusement. "Would you believe it?" she chuckled. "Aren't I a one and no mistake? 'Tis just what Mr. Weston used to say when he was alive.

"'Janie,' he'd say, 'you talk and talk and, bless me, I'm no wiser at the end than I was at the beginning. You always leave out the point, old girl, that's your trouble.' And so it is, sir, I freely admits it. Joe was right about that as he was about most things, but, there, I always says as we can't all be the same. There's some as gets to the point at once and some as don't, and I'm one of the ones as don't, although I'm sure I try. Good morning, sir, and thank you. If all the police were like you, sir, they'd get more told 'em and that's what I says—what's that, sir? Well, would you believe it? If I haven't been and done it again!

"I must say, sir, as you're more patient with me than those other gentlemen of the police were when I tried to help 'em. 'Dry up, Mother,' one of 'em actually says to me. The sauce of it. 'Dry up, Mother,' and him a mere boy. What the young folk are coming to these days I really don't know. There's my sister's girl, Gertie, as nice a girl as you'd wish to see in a day's march, excepting for her sauce. 'Put across your mother's knee and spanked, that's what you ought to have been, my gal,' I tells her, but it ain't no good. They just laughs at you and . . . yes, sir, I be a-coming to that, I hadn't forgotten this time. You wants to know who the lady was as came into this shop to buy those chocolates. Well, sir, as I was saying, she was the last person I ever expected to see coming through this door—not grand enough for the likes of her—and later on when I happened to think about it you could have knocked me down with a feather—all right, sir, all right; you're just like those other police gentlemen, want to know everything at once. Why, Miss Amelia Cartwright, of course. You know, sir, sister to the poor lady who——"

"I know," said Fraser. "Thank you very much; I'm much obliged." And he fled to avoid being overwhelmed in the further verbal flood which threatened.

"Amelia Cartwright," he murmured. "That's rather curious. I think a conversation with the lady is indicated."

UNCOMPROMISING, gaunt, and, Fraser could not help thinking, wary, Amelia Cartwright faced him that afternoon across her spotless sitting-room. She was in black, as befitted the loss of her sister, but any further signs of grief were conspicuous by their absence.

"Certainly I bought a small quantity of chocolates at Mrs. Weston's shop in Franchester," she admitted with composure. "It's not the kind of establishment which usually obtains my custom, but it happened to be handy. I bought them for my sister, Patience. She was partial to chocolates. I cannot stand the sickly things myself."

She smiled, thinly.

"May I ask what they have to do with my sister's death—which I understand to be the matter into which the police are inquiring?"

"Nothing whatever," Fraser told her frankly. "We have good reason to believe, however, that these identical chocolates were picked up later at the scene of your sister's death. They were tasted by a certain individual who became unwell, and analysis of the chocolates proved that several of them contained arsenic."

Miss Cartwright's eyebrows went up.

"The chocolates I purchased contained arsenic! Are you being serious, Inspector?"

"Quite," Fraser assured her.

"Then," said Amelia with decision, "they'll be the last I ever buy in Jane Weston's shop.

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Good gracious me, the woman should be summoned."

"The arsenic," Fraser said mildly, "was undoubtedly inserted after purchase."

She stared at him a moment, and then laughed grimly. "I'm not so sure," she said, "that I oughtn't to have my lawyer present before continuing this conversation. I give you credit, however, for not meaning that it was I who put arsenic in the chocolates. But I should be interested to know just what it is you are trying to find out."

"The adventures of those chocolates. You bought them when?"

"On Wednesday morning, the last day of my sister's life. I carried them home and gave them to her."

"At once?"

"At once. She thanked me and took them to her room."

"And presumably, since later on their weight was found to be intact, ate none of them. Wasn't that a bit unusual, seeing that she had a sweet tooth?"

Amelia shrugged. "I don't think so. She usually had a box going and would finish up the old one before starting on the new. That's probably what she did."

"Slipping the ones you bought her into her bag when she went out?"

"Obviously, I should say, since they were found later. She used to like to carry some in her bag. That's why I bought her only a small packet."

"H'm, I see. Now, Miss Cartwright, can you make any suggestion how the chocolates came to be tampered with?"

It seemed to him that a veil dropped across her eyes.

"No," she said, "I can't. You hardly expected me to be able to, did you?"

A question to which she received no answer. Fraser, in fact, rose to his feet with a suddenness she seemed to find a little surprising.

"Thank you, Miss Cartwright, I do not think, at the moment, there's anything more."

He shook hands with her and left, and at a discreet distance outside was joined by Detective-Sergeant Barnes.

"Well?" Fraser asked.

"In the guise of a subscription tout," Barnes said, "I interviewed the daily help at the back door. Miss Amelia, she told me, never subscribed to anything; it had always been left to poor Miss Patience to do that. I argued a bit and kept my eyes open. There's a tin of weed-killer on the scullery shelf."

"Is there?" said Fraser, and that was all.

Inside the house Amelia Cartwright sat very still.

"So," she murmured, "the poison in the chocolates wasn't strong enough—the eater of them became merely unwell. Someone, it would seem, miscalculated."

Laughing silently to herself, she appeared amused.

"WELL," Kerle asked, "what do you think of her? A bit of a character, isn't she?"

"Distinctly so," Fraser replied. "Not grieving to any extent over her sister's death, I should say. But am I wrong in thinking your tone significant? You probably know a good deal more about her than I do."

Kerle shook his head.

"I doubt if anybody knows all there is to know about that old girl. Had she any explanation how the arsenic got into the chocolates, by the way?"

"She hadn't. I didn't expect her to—but there's a tin of weed-killer in the house."

"The devil there is! But, after all, what's the significance of that? Amelia wouldn't want to kill her sister, would she?"

Fraser made no observation on this and Kerle eyed him sharply.

"I'll tell you one thing about her," he said. "She stalks about the countryside at night dressed as a man."

"Does she, by Jove? You're sure of this?"

"Practically. As you know, I'm a bit of a midnight prowler myself—still can't sleep unless I get a walk before going to bed—and one night I saw her slipping back into the house."

"I should like to put this theory of yours to the test," Fraser said slowly. "It might turn out to be of great importance."

"Then," said Kerle, "what about taking a walk abroad to-night? We might, or might not, come across the lady doing the same."

This was agreed upon, and Fraser, who with Barnes had put up at the Crown and Anchor, Brimley's one decent inn, slipped over to Rose Cottage when the last of the beer-drinkers had dispersed to their homes, and the two men sallied forth into the darkness of a moonless night.

THERE was a light in one of the upstairs rooms of Amelia Cartwright's little house which they watched for a few minutes from behind the hedge of a field which fronted the building. All at once it was extinguished and the lame man grunted.

"Well, that's that; come along, it's no good waiting any longer."

But Fraser's hand on his arm curbed his impatience.

"Give her a chance. We'll wait another five minutes and then . . . Listen, what's that?"

Both men recognised what it was—the soft opening and closing of the front door.

"You see!" Fraser whispered.

Straining their eyes, they peered through the top branches of the hedge and watched a slim figure slide through the gate and turn left-handed up the road. It was in man's clothing, but . . .

"Amelia!" Kerle murmured. "That's a woman's walk. Let's see where she goes."

Keeping slightly behind her, they crept along behind the hedge as quietly as possible. She was evidently wearing rubber-soled shoes, for her footsteps made no sound and they had to glance over the hedge every now and then to be sure that she was still there.

The field was a long one, with a gate at the end which would enable them to get back into the road. This they would have to do as a high hedge separated them from the next meadow and all further tracking would have to be done along the road itself.

They had nearly reached this gate, about a hundred yards from the house, when they heard a sudden sound of scuffling in the road and then a woman's scream. Peering over the hedge, they saw that a second figure had materialised and was apparently engaged in struggling with the first.

For the moment Fraser was nonplussed, for the hedge was too high and thick to get over or through, but Kerle's knowledge of the terrain stood him in good stead.

"This way," he cried, and set off at a run.

Starting to follow him, Fraser stumbled and went full length. Kerle, therefore, in spite of his game leg, was first over the gate.

The inspector, having picked himself up, was scrambling over when he saw Kerle run towards the two struggling figures, one of which at this moment detached itself from the other. There came a peculiar sound, a kind of plonk, and Kerle staggered back and then fell.

Instantly the second figure dashed away, vaulted a gate opposite the one Fraser and Kerle had climbed and vanished from the scene.

After a second's hesitation Fraser ran to Kerle, whom he feared was badly hurt, but when he reached him the little man, cursing vigorously, was once more upon his feet.

"Got me through the arm," he gasped; "air pistol, I fancy. Catching my heels against the grass margin made me topple over. After him, old man, I'm all right."

Relieved, the Scotland Yard man turned to chase the fugitive, only to meet with a second unlooked-for check. Without warning, the figure they had been stalking flung itself upon him, clawing and clutching at his face. It was a moment or two before he was able to seize its wrists and hold them.

"Your light," he called to Kerle.

The lame man turned on his electric torch, exhibiting in its rays the convulsed features and struggling form of Amelia Cartwright. She was dressed in her man's suit and seemed half-demented with rage and terror.

"It's all right, Miss Cartwright," Fraser soothed her. "We're here to help you," he added, telling her his name.

Whereat she ceased struggling and Fraser released her wrists.

"Someone tried to strangle me," she sobbed, "like they did my sister."

"Never mind," he answered quietly. "That's all over now."

He turned to Kerle.

"Look after her for a few minutes, will you? We've wasted too much time already."

Hardly waiting for the other's reply, he dashed for the gate over which Amelia's assailant had vaulted, jumped it in his turn and then stood gazing irresolutely over a wide expanse of meadow.

Before him the field stretched without a sign of any fleeing figure. Only a few moments had elapsed, but they had been sufficient, apparently, for the fugitive to get out of sight.

He was blissfully unaware of it, but behind a clump of furze only a few yards from him crouched the individual he was after. In his hand was the pistol, levelled now at the back of Fraser's head.

IT is quite likely that the decision Fraser came to then saved his life. Leading across the field, almost parallel with the roadway, was a path along which he set out at a run. With a sneer on his face the man behind the bushes watched him go. Then he doubled across the field at right angles, scrambled through a gap into another field, traversed that and came out into a country lane. Then he dragged a bicycle from its concealment, mounted it, and rode away.

Fraser, meanwhile, had reached a stile which led into a second field. He surveyed the emptiness of this for a while, shrugged his shoulders and began to retrace his steps. It was quite useless, he told himself, to run about these meadows at random.

When he got back to the road he found that positions had been reversed and that a now calm and collected Miss Cartwright was attending to Kerle's arm, which had

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been bleeding profusely. Fortunately, the bullet had done no more than make a furrow across it, but it was likely to be stiff and painful for a few days.

"Lucky for that chap I'd left my own automatic at home," Kerle growled. "See anything of him, Fraser? If'm, I was afraid you wouldn't."

The inspector waited until the first aid was completed and then turned to Amelia.

"You had a very narrow escape," Fraser told her gravely. "Why are you wandering about the countryside at night—dressed in a man's clothes?"

"That," she said tartly, "is my own affair. If I like to take a walk at night, I suppose I can. Nor is it anybody's business how I dress. I find these things more comfortable for walking. I should have thought the modern girl would have accustomed you to seeing a woman in trousers."

She gave a queer little laugh. "I think I ought to have been a man."

A revealing statement, Fraser reflected, although he made no comment upon it.

"Now, Miss Cartwright," he said briskly, "I suggest you let Mr. Kerle and me escort you home."

She made no demur, perhaps because she was more shaken by what had happened than she cared to admit. Almost in silence they walked back to her cottage, where Kerle and Fraser watched her let herself in with her key and then bolt the door behind her.

"Now what?" Kerle asked.

"This, my dear fellow. You're going to knock up Dr. Bathurst and ask him to have a look at that arm of yours—we don't want any complications setting in. I, on my part, am going to rout out Barnes and the car and drive over to Franchester. It's possible we may overtake *someone* interesting along the road."

DETECTIVE - SERGEANT BARNES had just dropped off into his beauty sleep when Fraser aroused him, but in a creditably short time was up and dressed and they sped along the Franchester Road, Fraser giving his subordinate a summary of what had happened as they went.

"If the fellow was using a car or a motor cycle," he concluded, "we probably shan't overhaul him, but if—as I have some reason to think may be the case—he's on a push-cycle we should do so."

"If he's a Franchester man," Barnes observed, "and not a Brimley Parva one."

A remark that Fraser found disturbing. If it had been a Brimley Parva inhabitant, they were on a wild-goose chase indeed.

"We'll have to risk that," he said doggedly. "So look out for a cyclist. We'll question every one we see."

For the first half of the five miles into Franchester they saw no one at all, and then, on rounding a curve, Fraser uttered an exclamation and jammed on his brakes.

His headlights showed on the left-hand side of the road a fallen cycle and the prostrate figure of a man.

IT was only a matter of a minute or two before the man sat up, blinking in the rays of the flashlight with which Fraser had been examining his features. He was a small, thin, ill-tempered-looking individual, and his hand went automatically to his head on which the Inspector and Barnes had already discovered a sizeable lump. Then he scowled at the pair of them.

"Who the devil are you?" he demanded.

"Police," Fraser informed him promptly. "I'd like to know who you are, and how you come to be lying here."

"Knocked off my cycle," the other jerked. "My name's Ailing, by the way—Doctor Ailing, as you'd know if you belonged to Franchester. I'd been out to see a woman who's just had a child—and was cycling home when I thought I heard another cyclist overtaking me, although he didn't sound his bell.

"Next moment I was sure of it. He came alongside me, crowding me into the gutter, and just as I was going to ask him what he thought he was playing at, something like a hammer descended on my head. The next thing I knew was you two bending over me—the police on the scene, too late as usual."

Fraser ignored the sneer.

"I take it you haven't the faintest idea who your assailant was?"

"No; if I had, I'd have told you quick and lively. I don't let people hit me over the head and get away with it. Someone with a grudge against me, I suppose, but I don't know *who*."

HE thrust his hand into his breast pocket, pulling out a note case, which he inspected with apparent anxiety in the light of the car lamps.

"It wasn't robbery at any rate," he muttered. "There's a five-pound note in that case, and I was afraid I'd find it gone. That makes it queerer still."

"How about this pistol?" Fraser asked. "Does it belong to you?"

The other eyed it for a moment and then nodded.

"Yes," he admitted, "it does. But it ought to be in my pocket. Where did you find it? Lying beside me? That's funny, too."

"Is it necessary, Doctor, to carry a pistol on your rounds?"

You'd probably consider so if you were a country practitioner, liable to be called out at all hours of the night. For one thing there have been one or two hold-ups around here lately after dark, and some of the cottagers keep dogs which are quite capable of attacking a cyclist, as I know to my cost, and would be all the better for a bullet in them. That air pistol doesn't require a licence, and is quite effective at close quarters."

"You haven't fired it at all to-night, have you?" Fraser asked drily.

"No, I haven't, though I'd have let the chap who knocked me out have something to go on with if I'd realised in time what he meant to do. Which reminds me—instead of catechising me, I suggest you get a move on and see if you can catch him."

"Quite sound advice," Fraser agreed, good-humouredly.

"Hop into the back of my car, Doctor—you can get your machine in as well with a bit of a struggle—and I'll drive you home. We'll look out for another cyclist on the way."

They did not come across another, however, until they were in the outskirts of Franchester itself, and then the young man Fraser questioned was able to prove he had just come from a neighboring house where he had spent the evening. So they dropped the doctor at his house, and turned again in the direction of Brimley Parva.

"Not a conspicuously successful outing," Fraser murmured.

"No, sir; funny about that doctor, though. I suppose it's a true bill?"

"Oh, I should say so, judging by the evidence. It'll have to be verified, of course."

THE first thing Fraser did next day was to check up Dr. Ailing's reason for being out. The fact that Kerle had been wounded by a shot from an air-pistol made this imperative, though he might by no means be the only possessor of one of these weapons in the district.

The doctor's story, as it happened, was proved up to the hilt. He had attended the woman in childbirth, whose name Fraser had contrived to elicit from him on the drive home, and had been in the house altogether two hours, the house itself being a couple of miles from Brimley Parva. It was manifestly impossible, therefore, for him to have been prowling about the village at the time of the attack on Miss Cartwright.

Fraser regarded these facts philosophically. A check like this was part and parcel of his work. Moreover, he had not been too sanguine of this particular trail leading anywhere in particular. Ailing's mishap had looked too genuine to be other than he had described. Two questions remained. Why was he attacked? Was there any connection between the assault on him and that on Miss Cartwright?

The inspector decided to talk things over with Sydney Kerle.

Going over to Rose Cottage, he found the lame man with his left arm in a sling—it would have to remain in for a day or two—but only too ready to discuss the previous night's events.

"Well," he asked at once, "did you have any luck after you left me?"

Fraser told him all about the finding of Dr. Ailing and Kerle pursed up his lips.

"Queer," he commented, "especially about that air-pistol. You're convinced about his alibi?"

"Absolutely; I've checked it up to the hilt. He couldn't have been the man who attacked Amelia Cartwright and shot you."

Kerle gave Fraser a searching look.

"Ever considered Amelia as a possible murderer of her sister?" he asked with deliberation.

The Scotland Yard man nodded with equal deliberation.

"Yes," he answered, "until last night. But what happened then knocks that theory on the head, I fancy. Amelia Cartwright, I'm prepared to admit, is a complex character of a kind that medical men are more conversant with than the police. If we knew the truth, and we may never know it in that connection, I should say it is more than probable that she put arsenic in those chocolates with the idea of killing her sister Patience, with whom she was quite likely extremely bored. Whether she gave them to her before she went out, as she said, or followed her with the idea of giving them to her in the field after enjoying Patience's terror of the darkness, I cannot tell—that second lot of woman's footmarks I mentioned to you rather gives color to the last hypothesis. If so, she may have seen her lying dead and dropped the chocolates in her agitation. The murderer may fear that she also saw and recognised him—hence the attack on her last night."

"By Jove," Kerle said admiringly, "you may not be far from the truth. But wouldn't she have given the alarm?"

"Not necessarily, because she had a guilty conscience. She had intended to kill her sister herself. Finding the job done for her, she possibly just slipped back home to

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await events. No doubt she would have destroyed the chocolates if she hadn't lost them in the shock of the moment."

"And you think she recognised the murderer?"

"No, unfortunately I don't. If she had, I feel certain she would have told us, especially after being attacked herself. I shall have another talk with her, but she's already said she didn't know who it was jumped out of the darkness upon her—and there I think she speaks the truth."

"I wonder," Kerle muttered. "Hullo," he broke off, "here's P.C. Chubb, our village sleuth, advancing up the garden path. Looks bursting with information, too."

He stuck his head out of the window.

"Walk in, Constable," he invited. "The front door's open."

Appearing extremely pleased with himself, if the grin on his round face was any criterion, the portly constable strode into the room and saluted Fraser. Under his arm he carried a brown-paper parcel.

"Acting on your instructions, sir," he said formally, "Sergeant Barnes and I searched the vicinity of the spot where you found Doctor Ailing. In the brook which is crossed by a bridge nearby I discovered —this."

With a movement that was consciously dramatic, he whipped the wrapping off the object he carried and dropped the latter on the table with a thud.

"Ye gods!" Kerle murmured softly.

It was an air-pistol of a large and powerful pattern.

"Good for you, Chubb," Fraser said cordially. "I thought something like that might turn up if we looked!"

WITH the wrapped-up pistol under his arm Fraser found himself ushered into Doctor Ailing's hall, on either side of which two dejected lines of panel patients sat on forms. The doctor's bellowing voice could be heard addressing one of their number inside the surgery.

"Nothing the matter with you at all!" he vociferated, opening the door and shooting a shabbily-dressed woman outside. "Come along, the next one. Don't waste my time."

Catching sight of Fraser, he stared as if not recognising him at first.

"Oh, it's you, is it, Inspector?" he said finally, in somewhat more mellow tones. "What can I do for you?"

"Just spare me a moment, if you will," Fraser said pleasantly. "It's merely a matter of routine."

Closing the surgery door behind him, he unwrapped what he was carrying.

"I wonder," he said, "if you've any idea to whom this pistol belongs?"

The doctor picked it up and examined it.

"No," he replied at length, "I certainly haven't; never seen it before to my knowledge. There's one other man in the town, a solicitor friend of mine, who's got one similar to mine—a Johnston. He's the only chap I know who has one of any make. This one's a Welbeck, and whoever it belongs to doesn't know how to look after it. There's actually rust forming on it here and there."

"Not so very surprising, Doctor. It's been lying in water for over twelve hours."

"Lying in water?"

"Yes, in that brook crossed by the Brimley Parva-Franchester road where you were knocked out last night. In fact there is reason to believe that this is what you were knocked out with—the butt end, of course."

The doctor's swarthy face darkened.

"The devil it is! Then I jolly well wish I could tell you its owner. I'd have a word or two to say to him myself."

"How's the head, by the way?" Fraser asked.

"Infernally sore and inclined to ache," the other growled. He re-examined the pistol, but handed it back to the inspector with a wry gesture.

"No good," he admitted. "I can't say whose it is. But you might let me know if ever you find out."

He let Fraser out himself, and his harsh voice could be heard bawling at the next unfortuntae "panel" as his visitor walked away.

GOING round to Franchester police station the inspector showed the weapon to Superintendent Cross and suggested that a constable be detailed to make a round of any shops in the town from which it might have been purchased.

"Though I'm pretty certain he'll draw blank," he said. "But we must make the investigation."

Cross agreed, and Fraser gave him a full account of the previous night's happenings.

"We require some men on duty in Brimley Parva at night," he insisted. "Barnes and I can take alternate shifts, of course, but with this midnight prowler about we need something like a cordon."

"Then you can't have 'em," Cross grumbled. "Those dashed strikers started playing old Harry last night and smashing shop windows. I want every man I've got to deal with them. The Chief Constable may get you some help from outside—I can't give it you."

"Not even to prevent another murder?" Fraser demanded acidly.

"There'll be murder here if some of those strikers cut loose," was the weary reply. Although back to duty, Cross was still feeling some nervous reaction from his misadventure with the chocolates.

So, seeing it was useless to argue with him, the Scotland Yard man left.

He was crossing Franchester's main square when he became aware of a commotion in a chemist's shop—Sinclair was the name above the portal—and a poorly-dressed young man rushed out of it with the chemist in hot pursuit. The fugitive shook off a passer-by's would-be detaining hand and then ran straight into Fraser, who had cut across to intercept him.

"He's a thief," the chemist panted, coming up. "He grabbed some notes I was counting and bolted with them."

"Better give him in charge," Fraser answered, indicating a uniformed constable on duty in the square, who was arriving on the scene. "I'm a police officer myself."

The youth held out the stolen notes. "Take 'em," he said sullenly. "I'll go quiet. It's food and lodging I want, and I'll get both of them in jail."

The constable went off with his captive, and Fraser escorted the chemist and his restored property back to the pharmacy. A middle-sized and dark-skinned young man, his clipped and sing-song speech as he poured forth profuse thanks made the inspector wonder if he were Welsh.

Fraser, who was in a hurry, cut short these thanks and it was with Cross's refusal to assist him rather than with the incident of the stolen notes that his thoughts were busy as he walked away.

That night it was left to Sergeant Barnes to patrol the sleeping village.

COLONEL HUBERT WARMAN, C.B., C.I.E., was one of Brimley Parva's most respected inhabitants. He was indeed the squire of the village, and there had been a Warman in his rambling old Tudor house for the past four hundred years. A distant relation of the Cartwrights, he had always made himself agreeable to Patience, whom he had liked, while deploring her subservient attitude to her sister, and as disagreeable as possible to Amelia, whom he frankly detested, an attitude which Amelia herself repaid with interest. Patience's violent end, therefore, he had regretted, remarking somewhat injudiciously to more than one person that it was "a pity it couldn't have been the other old cat," an observation which in due course found its way by roundabout channels to the ears of Amelia herself.

Whereupon that somewhat mysterious lady went straight upstairs and rummaged for something in the depths of her box. Had the colonel been there to see her, it would have given him food for thought.

On the evening of Fraser's visit to Franchester, he heaved himself somewhat gingerly from the depths of his armchair and tapped the face of the clock, which received this unusual treatment with studied disdain.

"B-r-r-r," or something like it, the colonel muttered explosively, suddenly aware of what he had done. With a furtive glance at his wife, who was concealing a smile over her knitting, he moved over to the barometer and struck it a resounding blow. More sensitive than the clock, the instrument winced under its torture, and the indicator jerked up sharply, to be regarded with approval by Colonel Warman.

"No rain to-morrow," he exclaimed, "Going up!"

At which instant the clock struck, and as if suspecting it of back-answering him for its maltreatment, he swung round and regarded it with a fierce expression.

"Half-past ten, my dear," he grated, "Time to start for Bedfordshire—ha! ha!"

With a docility born of long custom, Edith Warman, grey-haired but younger than her husband, rolled her knitting together and rose.

"Old martinet," she said with affection, "I don't believe you'd give me another five minutes if I begged you to. Don't stay too long in the garden to-night or I shall hear you've got your lumbago coming on again."

"Lumbago!" snorted the colonel. "Who's talking about lumbago? You go to bed and get your beauty sleep, young woman. Lumbago indeed!"

"Never heard of it, have you?" she laughed.

"But I seem to remember . . . Oh, all right, you old bear."

She planted a kiss on the end of his nose and then fled in mock terror before his ferocious scowl.

"Women!" the colonel growled. "Always fussing and coddling—God bless 'em."

Lighting a cigar of formidable size, he opened the french window of the room in which they had been sitting and strolled out on to the lawn.

As he sauntered over the grass his thoughts reverted to the terrible fate of his distant relative.

"Poor old Patience," he murmured; "not

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a sign yet of the scoundrel who did it. I'm glad Tate called in the Yard though—too big a job for the local police. I must have a word some time with that inspector fellow they've sent down."

From the lawn he walked on into the kitchen garden and through it until he came to a group of fruit trees—almost a small orchard—which adjoined the high boundary wall dividing the garden from a lane. There it was his wont to linger awhile, enjoying the fragrance of his cigar.

He did so as usual, seating himself on a rustic seat beneath the trees, and in the very act a premonitory twinge made itself felt in the small of the back.

"A bit cold to-night," he murmured. "Mustn't stay long or Edith'll have the laugh of me after all."

A MINUTE later a similar twinge caused him to wince.

"Hang these aches and pains," he muttered. "Hang getting old! Suppose I'd better go in."

He lurched to his feet, and as he did so something that his startled perceptions took at first to be a snake dropped from the tree and landed on his shoulder. Involuntarily his hand shot out and touched—a rope; a rope with a loop at the end.

He grabbed at it, but it eluded him and was drawn back into the tree, and looking up he caught sight of a slim, shadowy figure which glided, almost monkey-fashion, from that tree into the next, and thence on to the top of the wall from which it dropped into the lane below.

"I see you, you infernal rascal!" the colonel roared. "And if I had my gun I'd . . ."

There came no response from the intruder, only the pad of rubber-shod feet running swiftly up the lane.

Bristling, the colonel rushed to a door in the garden wall and turned the handle. As he expected, it was locked—it was always kept so, the key hanging on a nail in the hall. He shook it vindictively and in vain, hurled a final volley of abuse through it, and then turned towards the house, which he passed to go down the drive leading to the Franchester road.

"I'll set Chubb after that fellow," he muttered, "if I have to drag him out of bed!"

Where the drive debouched into the road he found a man holding a bicycle.

"Who the devil are you?" he demanded.

"Detective-Sergeant Barnes, sir, of the C.I.D."

"Oh," said the colonel. "Heard you were in the village with some big gun from the Yard. Well, you're just the chap I want. Someone's been trying to hang me."

"To what, sir?"

"Hang me, man; to one of my own apple trees."

In a few words he recounted what had happened. "If I hadn't had that twinge of lumbago," he finished grimly, "and decided to move, that noose would have been over my head as sure as eggs are eggs. No doubt about it."

"Where does that lane come out?" the sergeant asked.

"Leftwards on to the Franchester road, but the fellow ran the other way—I heard him. That would bring him into another lane leading to the small village of Townley. You can get into that lane close by here, next turning on the left."

"Good," Barnes said, "then I'll do it. Better get back into the house, sir, and stay there."

Grumbling something about knowing how to look after himself, the colonel went back to the house and upstairs to bed. As he passed his wife's door it opened and her head appeared.

"You've been a long time, Hubert," she reproached him. "Your lumbago . . ."

"Hang my lumbago!" roared the colonel. "Never felt better in my life."

Nevertheless, at the thought of that dangling noose he poured himself out a stiff whisky-and-soda and drank it off.

"Needed that," he grunted. "Shan't say anything about to-night to Edith; only scare her. Wonder if that policeman will overtake anyone—don't suppose he will."

He commenced to undress and then all at once became fixed, his hand in the small of his back.

"Hang this lumbago!" he groaned.

Ten minutes later he was in bed, and, a tribute to his nerves, asleep almost immediately.

Barnes, meanwhile, was pedalling towards Townley for all he was worth. He reached the village, a mere hamlet of half a dozen houses, without overtaking a soul. The village itself was in darkness as if its inhabitants had been slumbering for hours.

With a sigh the sergeant rode on through it in case of coming across an outlying building showing some sign of life. The lane had become a mere cart-track, and Chubb's cycle which he had borrowed for his night patrol was sadly in need of oil.

He found his outlying building all right—a farm into which the lane led and then terminated its existence. But it was in darkness like the rest of the houses, and Barnes was certain by this time that wherever Colonel Warman's assailant was, Townley was not the place.

"A wild-goose chase," he reflected bitterly, as he started back. "Oh, well, it's been no worse than hanging about Brimley Parva. A queer yarn, old Warman's, when you come to think of it. I suppose he isn't in the habit of seeing pink rats as well as dangling ropes. Must find that out to-morrow. Hang this machine! Chubb doesn't deserve to have a bike."

On reaching Brimley Parva again he turned off along the lane which skirted the back of Colonel Warman's grounds until the sight of branches overhanging the garden wall satisfied him that he must be at the scene of the alleged attack upon the colonel. The wall, rising smoothly for some fifteen feet, rendered him thoughtful.

Opposite the wall, a wire fence divided the lane from what seemed to be a piece of waste-land on which a good deal of debris had collected in the course of time. Climbing the fence, the sergeant peered about among this with the aid of his light, at first without any appreciable result. Then all at once he stopped short and whistled.

At his feet lay a considerable length of thin and rather dirty rope, one end of which was curled as if recently it might have been noosed. Barnes passed his light over this from end to end, and then commenced methodically to coil it.

Grouping the coils of rope over his shoulders, he set off for the Crown and Anchor, where Fraser, still not asleep, was striving to knit the straggling ends of the case into a coherent whole.

FRASER was interested in the rope, also in Barnes' story of the attack on Colonel Warman. Early next morning saw him, with Barnes, in the little orchard, much impeded by the colonel, whom the occurrence had filled half with indignation, half with a sense of importance.

"I'm off to see the Chief Constable to-day," he declared. "What we want here with this maniac abroad at night is men—not in ones or twos but in dozens. How did I shoot my tigers in Jinjinpore, sir? By means of beaters. Beaters drove the brutes to me, and I shot 'em. We'd make short shrift of this fellow on the same system, sir, believe me. Lumbago or not, begad, I'll sit up one night and take the chance of a pot-shot at him if I can get the men. And I won't miss him, either; used to get my tiger every time."

So pleased was he with this idea that he got out his car immediately after it occurred to him, and drove over to Franchester to put it before Major Tate. Fraser heaved a sigh of relief at his departure.

"Now, Barnes," he said, "we can get busy."

Examination of the sawn-off bough and of the one on which Warman declared he saw his assailant sitting produced pieces of hempen fluff which might well have come off the rope Barnes had found.

"We'll have these analysed," Fraser said, "to see if the rope was their parent stem, but I should say it was."

"Funny the chap should leave a clue like this rope behind him, isn't it?" Barnes asked.

"I'm not so sure it's going to be so useful to us as you think, and I fancy old Warman's friend anticipated that. For one thing it may have been bought from any junk shop in London, or anywhere else for that matter. There are scores of ship chandlers' shops, too, all round the vicinity of the docks. Another point is the age of the rope. Anyone who sold it has probably forgotten everything about the transaction by now. It may even have been found lying on this waste ground by its last user and thrown back there when he decamped. No, taking everything into consideration, I shan't be surprised if we find it of little use in laying the gentleman by the heels."

He stooped as he spoke and picked up something from the ground, which he transferred to his waistcoat pocket.

"What's that?" the sergeant asked.

"An aspirin tablet or something of the kind."

Barnes smiled.

"Oh, well," he remarked, "it may come in useful when you or I get a headache over this job."

THAT afternoon found Colonel Warman cleaning and polishing the rifle he had not used since shooting big game in India a good many years ago. He had worked off his theory of employing beaters on the long-suffering Chief Constable, and had snorted with disgust when Tate pointed out that rounding up a criminal and rounding up tigers were not quite the same thing. On one point he remained determined—to look out for his previous night's assailant and take a pot-shot at him if he got the chance.

"I'll do it," he muttered, "if I have to stay out all night. Tate's become an old woman since he took up that police job—lost his dash. I'll show him!"

He polished with redoubled vigor, and in his mind's eye pictured the unknown criminal falling before his unerring aim.

In spite of his wife's protests, therefore, he announced his intention of taking his customary turn in the garden before going to bed, and by slipping out of a side door he managed to conceal the fact that he had the rifle with him. Making straight for the kitchen garden at the point where

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it adjoined the tiny orchard where he had experienced his previous unpleasant adventure, he commenced a regular sentry-go up and down its paths, taking care, however, not to get actually underneath the trees. He looked round for some place where he could rest and, if possible, see and not be seen.

The very spot at once presented itself and made him wonder that he hadn't thought of it before. It was a rustic summer-house, on the edge of the kitchen garden, and facing the cluster of fruit trees which formed the particular object of his vigil.

He turned towards it, and as he did so his eye caught sight of something which in the darkness took on the semblance of a crouching man. Instantly the colonel's rifle came to his shoulder.

"Stay where you are," he commanded, "or by gad I'll fire!"

The object remained motionless and silent, so much so in fact that it was not long before Colonel Warman began to have a sheepish inkling of what it really was—a gooseberry bush, neither more nor less.

"Eyesight or nerves," he grumbled. "Not what they were; shouldn't have made that mistake in India. I'm getting old!"

Chastened, he made his way to the summer-house and settled himself on its not uncomfortable seat, the rifle across his knees.

"Better than walking about," he told himself. "I can stay here for two or three hours if I like. Edith, thank goodness, won't wait up to see what time I come in."

But alas for human endurance—elderly human endurance! The night was mild, lumbago absent, time passed slowly. The colonel's gaze at first fixed keenly on the trees, relaxed; his eyes closed; he nodded.

He reopened them with a start and a feeling of self-admitted guilt.

"Sleeping at my post, begad," he murmured. "Hubert Warman, pull yourself together."

For another fifteen minutes he remained fiercely vigilant. He heard the church clock strike eleven, and would not have been surprised if it had been two. Then once more his eyelids drooped, his chin sank on his chest, and this time he slept in real earnest.

He therefore did not see the shadow which appeared for a moment on the top of the wall, seemed to merge with the trees, and then flitted from trunk to trunk along the ground, making always in the direction of the summer-house.

It had reached the edge of the clearing and was contemplating the intervening space when a loud crash broke the stillness. The rifle had slipped from Warman's knees and fallen heavily on the floor. Almost instantly there came a shout and the sound of running feet.

The shadow slid back into the trees, vanished, appeared for a moment on the wall-top, and then vanished again.

SNORTING angrily, the colonel stooped, picked up the rifle, and confronted the two figures who had materialised in the doorway.

"Who the devil," he commenced, "are you?" only to recognise them before the reassuring reply.

"Oh, it's you, Inspector, is it? And Chubb? What brings you here?"

"Chubb is on night patrol," Fraser answered, "and I thought I'd take a look round your grounds with him before turning in. You seem to be on guard yourself, sir. What was that noise we heard? Anything wrong?"

"Yes," Warman growled in patent self-disgust, "something badly wrong. I'm an old dodderer, a has-been, and I can't keep awake. I settled down to see if that fellow put in an appearance again, but nothing happened and I dropped off to sleep. What's more I dropped my rifle—that's what you heard just now, and it woke me up. I've learnt my lesson and I'm going in to bed. That chap won't come to-night—be a fool if he did, as he might guess we'd be on the qui vive. Good of you two fellows to take so much trouble, but I expect you're wasting your time, like me. Come inside and have a drink now you're here, but don't make a row and wake up the missus; I'll get it in the neck for not being in bed an hour ago if you do."

CHUBB, with memories of Mrs. Chubb, grinned sympathetically in the darkness, and after Fraser had stilled his scruples about accepting refreshment when on duty, tiptoed into the house in the wake of the others with exaggerated care.

He took a modest glass of beer, Fraser a whisky-and-soda, and then the three men parted—Warman to go upstairs to bed, the inspector to the Crown and Anchor, and Chubb, after another conscientious patrol of the grounds, to some distant part of the village.

A light appeared in Colonel Warman's bedroom window, remained in being for some twenty minutes, and was then extinguished, Chubb's burly figure emerged from the garden into the main road, and a shadow appeared on the summit of the wall and then flitted, ghost-like, amidst the trees.

It crept up to the house beneath the Colonel's window, remained there until there could be heard faintly the robust snoring of a sleeping man, and then, with consummate ease, commenced to swarm, hand over hand, up an adjacent rainwater pipe. Reaching the colonel's window, it pushed wider the already open casement, and slid noiselessly over the sill.

On the night of Colonel Warman's vigil, Sydney Kerle set out on another of his customary peregrinations.

He called at the Crown and Anchor for Fraser, to find that he was out, and departed feeling a little hurt.

Still inwardly fulminating his grievance, he made an almost complete circuit of the village without result and then all at once he drew back into the shadows and stood stock still. Ahead of him, coming it seemed from the direction of the Warmans' house, materialised a familiar form.

"Amelia," he murmured, "or I'll eat my hat."

Belief turned to certainty as he crept as silently as possible behind her, closing up the gap. Miss Cartwright it was, clad again in her cloth cap and man's suit. In her hand she carried something that puzzled Kerle. It looked like a whip or a dog's lead in the gloom.

"What's she up to now?" Kerle asked himself as he followed in her wake.

Rather to his disappointment, she turned in at her own gate when she reached it, and it struck him that whatever purpose she had in coming out that evening had already been achieved.

"Blow it!" muttered Kerle, who had secretly been hoping for some excitement comparable with what had happened the last time he and Fraser had spied upon her wanderings.

Behind the high hedge which separated her garden from the road he paused and listened for the closing of the door which would denote she had gone inside. Not hearing it, his curiosity became aroused. Apparently she was doing something in the garden. But what?

His small stature would not allow him to peer over the hedge, so he tiptoed to the gate and peeped through that. There was no sign of Amelia, who seemed to have vanished into thin air.

There was never any diffidence about Sydney Kerle. If snooping around would enable him to find out anything he wanted to find out, he snooped. He did so now; pushing open the gate, he entered as quietly as he could.

It was then that he encountered all the excitement he wanted—and more. Close to the gate was a clump of bushes, and just as he imagined he heard a rustle in these something settled over his head about his throat and was pulled tight. A wave of horror enveloped him as he realised that he was being strangled.

Fortunately his injured arm was out of its sling and with both hands he tore desperately at the throttling noose. In vain, the cord tightened rather than loosened, and as if from a great distance he heard a woman's berserk laugh.

Whereupon the urge for self-preservation conquered all thoughts of chivalry. He struck out blindly, savagely, and felt his fist connect with something soft. Immediately there came a shrill cry in another key. The strain on the noose ceased, and dimly through the roaring in his ears he sensed the patter of retreating footsteps. There came the bang of the front door and then silence.

More than half-choked, shaken and trembling, Kerle released the cord from his throat and stood drawing in great gulps of air. He saw a light go on in one of the upstairs rooms and took a few unsteady steps towards the house, only to stop short and stare down at the thin, noosed rope he held in his hand.

"No point in forcing my way in," he muttered. "It's a case for Fraser and the police. Well, I know who killed her sister now—the murderous old hag."

His taste for nocturnal wandering thoroughly sated for once, he limped back to the village. The Crown and Anchor was in darkness, so that he could not tell whether Fraser and Barnes were there or not.

"Not that it matters," he told himself wearily. "My story will keep until the morning. She's not likely to run away or get far if she does."

Feeling that a drink of brandy and a long sleep were the two things he wanted most in life, he turned into Rose Cottage in search of them.

THEY found Colonel Warman next morning lying with convulsed and swollen face in bed, the cruel marks of a strangling cord only too visible around his throat.

The maid who took up his shaving water, although he did not reply to her summons, had merely left it outside his door and gone away. He did not always trouble to answer her, she said, and as he did not care for her to come into his room she had just acted as she had done many times before.

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No idea that anything was amiss, therefore, occurred to anyone until the colonel failed to materialise at breakfast. Then, thinking that he had overslept—an unprecedented contingency—Mrs. Warman had sent the parlormaid upstairs to tell him breakfast was ready.

Again of course the girl could get no answer, and seeing the water still outside had tried the door, which was locked, and run downstairs to tell her mistress.

Edith Warman went upstairs in her turn with a like result. Fearing that her husband might have had a stroke, she summoned the chauffeur, and the application of his powerful shoulder broke in the door.

Of the two it was the man who was the more upset and horrified at what they saw. Mrs. Warman, dissembling her grief and shock and outwardly calm, sent him off immediately for the police and herself telephoned to Dr. Bathurst to come at once.

P.C. Chubb was at breakfast when the Warman chauffeur came pounding at the police station door. His news stupefied the constable, but he hurried round to the Crown and Anchor to find Fraser and report.

What he had to say hit Fraser hard. He was inclined to blame himself for not having remained on guard in the garden throughout the night. Yet surely the odds had been against attacks on Warman on successive nights, and in his own house he might have been regarded as reasonably safe. Moreover, he, Fraser, could not be on duty both by day and night.

Barnes and he at once joined Chubb and the chauffeur and hurried up to the house—so close that it was not worth while getting out the car.

Edith Warman, pale but still composed, met them in the hall.

"You can go upstairs at once, Inspector," she said. "You will find Dr. Bathurst already there."

Accompanied by Barnes, and guided by the chauffeur, Fraser ascended to the colonel's bedroom, the chauffeur of course descending again when the two police officers went inside. Bathurst, who had been bending over the still figure on the bed, straightened up as they entered, and shook his head in answer to the inspector's inquiring glance.

"Dead," he said in low tones, "been dead for many hours. Strangled in the same way that Patience Cartwright was strangled—the neck broken as before. I don't pretend to be a detective, but I would be willing to bet that the murderer was the same in each case. There's further evidence, as a matter of fact, to show that he was. See that paper pinned to his pyjamas there?"

Averting his glance from the dead man's pitiable countenance, Fraser, without touching it, bent over the sheet of paper referred to. It was of quarto size, looked like an ordinary piece of typewriting paper, and bore a few lines of printed capitals scrawled in ink:—

"First Patience Cartwright, that foolish old woman. Now Colonel Warman, who will bluster and shout no more. There will be one more victim, and then my vengeance will be appeased. Brimley Parva need fear me no longer.

"The Avenger."

"Kind of him to tell us that," Fraser gritted between his teeth.

He glanced at the doctor.

"At approximately what time would you say this happened?"

Bathurst shrugged his shoulders.

"Roughly, I should put it somewhere between eleven and two, probably nearer the former hour than the latter."

Fraser turned to Barnes. "Chubb and I left him," he said, "about half-past eleven, just about to go upstairs to bed. Either the murderer must have been waiting for him, concealed in this room, or—more likely . . ."

He crossed to the window, swung back the partly opened casement, and looked out.

"One story from the ground," he murmured, "and a perfectly good rain-pipe running up past the sill. Ah, what have we here?"

He turned his head. "Barnes," he said, "just hang on to my legs like a good chap. There's something I want to reach."

The sergeant did as he was bid, and Fraser hung head downwards out of the window to the limit of his stretch. Below him and to his left was a join in the pipe to which adhered a tiny strand of grey material, which by a great effort he secured. When Barnes had hauled him inside again, the two of them examined it together under a magnifying glass which Fraser invariably carried. Both reached the same conclusion.

"A shred from a pair of dark flannel trousers, I should say, torn on that projection there."

Barnes nodded. "Yes, I agree; always providing the murderer got in that way. I think he did."

Fraser went down on his knees and examined the carpet through his lens.

"Little doubt of it," he asserted. "Look here, a faint but distinct trail leading towards the bed, and, fainter still, coming back from it."

He picked up a tiny portion of dry earth.

"If I'm not mistaken, we'll find that corresponds with the garden soil."

He rose to his feet. "Test the window and any other likely object for finger-prints, Barnes. I'm going downstairs to speak to Mrs. Warman."

"I'll go with you," the doctor chimed in. "I can do nothing here. There'll have to be a formal inquest, of course."

This was so self-evident that Fraser did not trouble to reply. When they reached the hall a frightened maid told them that her mistress was in the dining-room.

"Go in and see if she's all right," Fraser suggested to the doctor. "I'll telephone to Cross and join you later."

There was a telephone in the hall, and on this he rang up the Franchester superintendent and told him what had happened.

Cross was obviously startled.

"I'll be over at once," he promised. "How on earth did you come to let it happen, man?" he added peevishly. "What's the matter with you—asleep?"

The slamming down of his receiver prevented Fraser—perhaps fortunately—from replying.

Dr. BATHURST emerged from the dining-room as Fraser made his way towards it.

"She's wonderful," he whispered, "although I'm afraid a reaction will set in later. But you'll find her quite able to tell you anything she can. I shall look in again this afternoon to see how she is."

Edith Warman fully bore out the doctor's words. Her almost unnatural composure remained, and she greeted the inspector with a faint smile. Nevertheless, there was a look in her eyes, something of the uncomprehending expression of a hurt child, which hinted at trouble to come.

Fraser took the chair she indicated opposite her own, and wasted no time in further commiseration which might have an effect upon her he did not desire.

"I won't keep you long," he said gently, "but there are just one or two things I should like to ask you, if I may."

She bent her head in assent.

"Firstly, then, has your husband ever spoken of anyone who might have a grudge against him?"

"No," she answered, "never, and I don't think there was anyone whose grudge would carry him to—to those lengths. His rather brusque manner, of course, annoyed some people, though most of them knew, as I did, that his bark was much worse than his bite."

"You have been married to him long?"

"For thirty-five years, most of the time in India, the last ten years here."

"And casting your mind back over that time, you can think of nothing that could possibly have a bearing on what has happened?"

"Nothing; that is—no, nothing."

All the same, Fraser was not entirely satisfied. There was something, he felt, that she was keeping back. But he knew also that this was not the time to insist on her telling it. His experience warned him that she would merely persist in her denial. Later on, perhaps, when she had had time to think things out, he might approach her again.

For the time being, therefore, he let the subject slide and tried another tack.

"That paper pinned to the colonel's jacket—you noticed it?"

Her lips twitched, and her fingers twisted round each other in her lap. Nevertheless, her voice remained steady.

"I saw it, Mr. Fraser, and read it. To me it conveyed nothing but the outpourings of a madman."

He rose.

"Thanks," he said quietly. "I hardly expected you to be able to shed any light upon it, but it was necessary for me to ask."

"I know; I'm only sorry I cannot tell you more."

Once again Fraser was conscious of a belief that there was something she hadn't told him, but he knew that he mustn't push her further.

No sooner was Fraser's interview with Mrs. Warman over than Superintendent Cross arrived from Franchester. On the way he had reflected uncomfortably that had the Scotland Yard man's request for assistance been granted, Warman's murder might never have occurred. His manner towards Fraser therefore was more ingratiating than it had been on the telephone.

As he and Fraser left the house together they encountered Sydney Kerle, who was laboring under greater excitement than he usually allowed to show.

"I've just heard about poor old Warman," he greeted them, "and I haven't a shadow of a doubt who the murderer will turn out to be—the same madwoman who tried to strangle me!"

In a few words he told them of his unnerving experience of the night before.

"She was coming from the direction of the Warmans' house when I saw her first," he concluded. "And there," he said dramatically, "is the cord with which she must have killed the colonel and nearly finished me."

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He thrust it into Fraser's hands, who examined it with set and thoughtful face.

"It's possible," he admitted slowly, "granting that an old woman like her could climb up that rain-pipe into the colonel's room."

"Amelia could," Kerle answered positively. "She's as strong as a horse, as I know to my cost. And you mustn't judge her as you would a woman who's sane."

"That's true," Fraser admitted. "All the same," he murmured half to himself, "I was prepared to cast her for the role of third victim rather than that of assassin. But after what you've told us we've got to tackle her, and tackle her at once."

The three of them set out for Frame Cottage, to find when they reached it that the morning's milk was still outside the door, to their repeated rings there was no answer.

"Looks as if she's done a bolt already," Kerle muttered. "However, with her distinctive appearance she won't be difficult to trace."

While he was speaking he drew a tool with a glass-cutter's diamond at the end of it from his pocket, and calmly cut a piece from the glass panel of the door. Next moment he had inserted his arm and had it open.

"Irregular," the superintendent pointed out. "Still, under the circumstances . . ."

They walked inside.

In the two downstairs sitting-rooms and kitchen they found no one, and the same was the case with the first of the bedrooms they inspected upstairs. But as they entered the second bedroom—Amelia Cartwright's own as presently transpired—they uttered a simultaneous exclamation.

Stretched out on the floor in her man's clothing was Amelia herself, and a glance at her informed them that she was dead.

FRASER'S first impression was that he had been right and that here was the self-styled "Avenger's" third victim, but further investigation placed the matter in a different light.

By the side of the body was the tin of weed-killer Barnes had noticed, and a glass from which it seemed safe to assume the wretched woman had drunk sufficient of the poisonous liquid to kill her. She had apparently been dead for many hours.

"Committed suicide," Kerle murmured, "after throttling Warman and trying to throttle me."

Fraser made no reply. He was reading two or three sheets inscribed in an angular and spidery hand he had found on an old-fashioned desk in a corner of the room. The first was headed in large letters CONFESSION.

"Listen to this, you two," he said, and commenced to read aloud:—

"CONFESSION

"I, Amelia Esther Cartwright, am a murderess. For years I have been sick of my sister Patience with her silly puling ways, and at last I made up my mind to rid myself of her for ever.

"I bought some chocolates, put weed-killer into them, and hoped that she would eat them and die. I sent her to the Homers' farm to fetch a new kitten because I knew she would be terrified of the dark. Also I expected her to eat some of the chocolates on the way.

"But the fool left them behind. I hurried after her to give them to her, and found her by the stile half-way across the fields, afraid to go any farther. I had taken a piece of cord with me—it struck me that it would be more certain than the chocolates. I put it round her neck and strangled her.

"Having got rid of Patience so easily, why, I asked myself, shouldn't I remove others who were obnoxious to me? The name of Colonel Warman occured to me at once. An odious person, Hubert Warman; liked Patience but was always abominably rude to me. Well, he should go where Patience had gone. The idea of his big red face turning purple from strangulation filled me with pleasure. It would take a bit of planning, but I had no doubt I could bring it about.

"Before I could do so, a queer thing happened—someone tried to strangle me. I was saved—ostensibly—by Mr. Kerle and the inspector from Scotland Yard, but they didn't hoodwink me as they thought they did. The whole affair, of course, was planned by them to shake my nerve—I think they were a bit suspicious over Patience. The 'strangler,' I feel sure, was one of the police. But I managed to retain a tight hold on myself and keep them guessing. If they thought the shock would make me talk they must have been disappointed.

"Sydney Kerle I put down as the 'brains' of the stratagem—I am aware of the part he played in the solution of the Risefield murders—and dooketed the fact in my mind for future action.

"This interlude over, I turned my attention once more to Hubert Warman. I knew he took a walk in his garden every evening, and smoked a pipe or cigar on a seat under some fruit trees at the bottom of it. I had only to conceal myself in one of those trees, drop a noose over his head, and the thing was done.

"I achieved this all right, but at the critical moment he saw me—he couldn't recognise me, of course—and ran screaming with fear back to the house. This wasn't his account of events, naturally, but it's what happened—the old coward.

"Well, he'd got away for the time being—I vowed it shouldn't be more than that. But now, alas, I shall never have my revenge on him—after what's happened tonight.

"To-night I bungled. Clad in my beautiful man's suit—how that tailor in London stared when I asked him to measure me for it, and how easily he was gulled when I spoke of fancy dress—and carrying my trusty little noose in case I found some use for it, I caught that ineffable Sydney Kerle spying on me like the little sneak he is. I lured him into my garden, and from the shelter of some bushes dropped the noose over his head and pulled it tight.

"I might have known. He has none of the instincts of a gentleman, that man. He struck me violently, forcing me to let go of the cord and retreat into the house.

"So here I am—unmasked, my secret known. Tomorrow—or rather today—the police will be here, questioning me, third-degreeing me most likely, to make me confess that I killed Patience. But I will defeat them yet. I shall drink the weed-killer, and this time I shall make certain that there is enough.

"But because I don't want to 'go hence' without my cleverness being known, I am writing this confession. It will form, I think a striking memorial to

"AMELIA ESTHER CARTWRIGHT."

FOR a few moments after Fraser finished reading there was silence. Both Kerle and Cross had listened with absorption, and it was the latter who spoke first.

"Well I'm blest!" he exclaimed. "So we can take it that Amelia Cartwright killed them both—a nice old lady, I must say."

"On the contrary, that's just what we can't assume," Fraser answered sharply. "That poor woman, in my opinion, is more to be pitied than blamed. She never killed her sister—or Colonel Warman either if it comes to that."

"Didn't she?" Kerle demanded. "Why not? She jolly well nearly killed me."

His tone was emphatic, but there was a tinge of doubt about it that Fraser was quick to notice.

"I admit that, but if I'm not mistaken you were the first person she ever attempted to, by strangulation at any rate.

"I'm quite certain, Kerle, that you have noticed the inconsistencies in that statement, as I have. To take up one point only, if she strangled her sister, why in the name of fortune should anyone try to strangle her?"

"Because they saw her do it and thought they'd try a little lynch law on their own."

"AN argument for argument's sake, if I'm to judge by the lack of conviction in your tone. No, Kerle, that won't wash. Let's take the statement in proper order.

"That she tried to poison Patience with the chocolates I'm quite prepared to believe; it fits in with the theory I expressed to you before, but I do not think she took a cord out with her, for the simple reason I'm willing to bet, that the idea of strangulation hadn't then entered her head."

"I'm not so sure about that," Kerle interrupted. "There are some queer rumors flying about, and Mrs. Bathurst—not at all an imaginative or gossippy individual—says that when she broke the news to Amelia about her sister, she seemed to know that she had been strangled. She put it down to second-sight or something of the kind. One could place a different construction on it now."

"The construction I put upon it, as I told you the other day, is that Amelia, following her sister to the stile, found her lying dead, and correctly diagnosed the cause of death. Not until then did she begin to toy with the idea of strangling people she didn't like, and in this connection Colonel Warman, whom she cordially detested, did probably come into her mind. In the meantime, however, someone attempted to strangle her, and the ludicrous statement that this was a put-up job by the police is indicative of her mental condition.

"Come now to what she says about Warman. She's curiously vague as to how she got into his garden and up those trees. Moreover, her account of his running away screaming with fear is manifestly false. Whatever he was, he wasn't the kind of man to do that. It's just a bit of perverted feminine spite to discredit him the more.

"Her next statement does more to invalidate her account of events than anything else. She vows to get her revenge on him later, but laments that she never will owing to exposing herself by attacking you. Therefore, she didn't attack him a second time—she could not have refrained from boasting about it if she had—and in fact had no idea whatever that he had been attacked and killed.

"She was a peculiar woman, to put it mildly, who undoubtedly in places overstepped the border line of sanity. People of her type are often strongly imitative, and the strangling of Patience induced in her a desire to strangle, too. You will note, however, that she wasn't carrying a cord on the night we rescued her from her attacker."

"How did she find out about the first attempt on Warman's life if she wasn't there?"

"The colonel talked, no doubt; he was the kind of man who would."

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"Then," Kerle persisted, "if she didn't use her noose on anyone else, why should she pitch on me?"

"Because you were the only one who really gave her the chance. Moreover, her crazy brain held a grudge against you for the imagined reason she gives. And if the fly chooses to walk into the spider's parlor. . ."

Kerle shivered. He would not forget in a hurry those moments when death had stared him in the face.

"Unfortunately," Fraser went on, "from her point of view she bungled the attempt, and foreseeing the result—arrest for attempted murder, incarceration in an asylum, for she was quite likely aware that she was over the borderline at times—she drank the weed-killer.

Kerle looked very thoughtful. "I'm not sure," he confessed, "that I don't think you're right. In that case we're back at the beginning, and the criminal is still to find."

It was left to Cross to impart an unintentional touch of comedy to the rather grim discussion.

"One thing is cleared up, at any rate," he said with obvious satisfaction; "we know who doctored the chocolate which disorganised my system."

IF Brimley Parva had been stirred by Patience Cartwright's murder, it was positively stunned by the further fatalities which swept away two of its best-known inhabitants on the same night. The police, meanwhile, under a good deal of criticism, kept their own counsel.

Fraser went methodically to work, unswerving in his belief that the murderer of Patience Cartwright and the colonel was the same, and that he had also made the attack on Amelia, frustrated by Kerle and himself. The rope discovered by Barnes proved to be one that had been thrown out on to the waste land by a cottager. Analysis of the fluff found on the bough showed that it had been employed by Warman's assailant, but beyond that it established nothing.

The unexpected suicide of Amelia Cartwright brought duties in its train which prevented Fraser from having the further talk with Mrs. Warman he had contemplated. Nevertheless, he did not forget his feeling that she had, either by accident or design, omitted something that might have a bearing on the case. As soon as possible, he told himself, he would call on her again—and then he had another idea.

Some twenty miles from Brimley Parva lived a General Franklin, an old Indian Army officer and a friend of Fraser's father.

He rang the general up on the phone, divulged his identity, and received a cordial invitation to lunch for the following day.

Franklin, a hale and hearty man of seventy-five, welcomed him warmly.

"Bless my soul," he said, "you were at Sandhurst, Geoffrey, when I saw you last. I never thought you'd be a policeman. So you're engaged on that Warman business, are you?"

"Yes, sir, and I want your help. I'm hoping you can tell me something of Colonel Warman's past life."

The General regarded him shrewdly.

"That's the way the cat jumps, is it? So you don't believe that Amelia Cartwright had anything to do with it, although the police at the inquest seemed to place some credence in that rigmarole she left behind her."

"Between ourselves, sir, I can tell you that was eye-wash. I personally have no doubt the murderer was someone else."

"But you don't know, eh? You think that something in Warman's past may have a bearing on what's happened, and that I may be able to tell you more than Mrs. Warman has thought fit to up to the present? Well, perhaps I can. I knew him well in India."

Fraser was conscious of excitement. Something told him that his idea of communicating with General Franklin was going to bear fruit.

"Queer fellow, Warman," the General went on; "not everybody's meat, of course. A bluff, good-hearted chap, but too much the typical stage or comic-paper colonel for some of us. A bit of a lad for the girls, too, in his younger days—though perhaps he wasn't the only on," and he chuckled reminiscently.

"All the same there are limits, and he went over them. There was a nasty episode only a year or two after he was married. He had a love-affair with a native girl and had to leave the country for a time until it blew over. He went back again later on to a different station. It was hushed up as much as possible, but there was an ugly aftermath. She was the daughter of a small Parsee merchant who was suspected of strangling her after her child was born. It was never proved, but most people thought he did it. I don't know what happened to the child."

"Was it a boy or a girl?"

"A boy. It didn't do Warman any good, of course, but he lived it down in the end. Most trying for his poor wife. It was chiefly for her sake that people condoned it as they did. I'm not telling tales out of school, by the way. It was common gossip at the time."

"Queer that Warman should meet his end by strangulation, too."

"Good Lord, man, you're not suggesting there's any connection, are you? All this happened thirty years ago."

"Yes, sir, I suppose so." All the same, Fraser reflected, he would like to know what happened to the son.

THE post that evening brought Fraser a letter at which he stared with quickened pulses before he carefully tore it open. It was addressed to him at the Crown and Anchor in straggling capitals, and bore the postmark, "London, W.1."

The note inside was also in capitals:—

"Fate," it ran, "has stepped in and robbed me of my third and last destined victim. You can go back to London, my dear Mr. Fraser; I shall trouble the neighborhood no more.

"THE AVENGER."

"So I was right," Fraser muttered. "Amelia was to have been the next. You forget, my anonymous correspondent, that two unsettled accounts between us still remain."

The following morning Fraser drove over to Franchester. He had a short conversation at the police station with Superintendent Cross, and then commenced to stroll in apparently aimless fashion about the town.

He did nothing more than gaze in the shop windows until he noticed Doctor Ailing cross the Square and enter the shop of Sinclair the chemist. Quickening his pace, he walked in behind him.

It struck him as he entered that there was a bone of contention between the two. Ailing's voice was raised and he was gesticulating angrily.

"I tell you you've got to," he said. "There are no 'buts' about it either."

Then he caught sight of Fraser and his tone changed.

"Why, here's our sleuth from Scotland Yard! Found the chap who hit me over the head, Inspector?"

"No," Fraser admitted, "I'm afraid we haven't. If you'll forgive my saying so, a more important event has occupied all our energies since then—two events, in fact."

"Ah, yes, Warman and Amelia Cartwright. Queer affairs, both. 'Pon my word, when I heard that statement of hers read at the inquest it made me think she might have murdered Warman herself. But, of course, she didn't. I suppose that confession was just a tissue of lies?"

"Of course it was," Sinclair the chemist chipped in in his rather sing-song tones. "That woman was as mad as a hatter. I always thought so when she came in here. Haughty as you make 'em, too. A pharmacist, seemingly, was dirt beneath her feet. I told her to take her custom elsewhere in the end."

"That's the style," Doctor Ailing said approvingly. "I don't stand any nonsense of that kind myself. Got fetched out of bed at two in the morning once to attend to old Warman. Nothing the matter with him except that he'd overeaten the night before, and so I told him. Seemed to think it was my job to get up at all hours of the night to ease his tummy. I let him know differently before I left, the old fool, although I admit he got his own back by never having me in the house again. Of course, Bathurst set up in Brimley Parva later, which made it easier for him to do without me. Mealy-mouthed fellow, Bathurst—kow-tow to anybody to get a fee."

But perhaps because he realised that this criticism of a professional colleague was not quite the thing, Ailing changed the subject.

"Are you any nearer getting to the bottom of the mystery, Inspector?"

It seemed to Fraser that for some reason both of them awaited his reply with something approaching tension.

"Yes," he answered boldly, "I'll go so far as to say that it's only a question of time before the criminal stands revealed."

From one of them—he couldn't tell which—there came the faintest sibilant hiss of an indrawn breath.

"A local criminal?" Ailing asked softly.

For an instant Fraser hesitated. Then he plunged again.

"Yes," he repeated, "a local criminal."

The doctor turned quickly, his face all at once suffused with anger and something more—perturbation it might have been.

"Good-bye, Sinclair," he jerked. "I must be going. Can't waste my time gossiping here all day. Send me up those drugs I ordered, without further delay."

And without troubling to salute Fraser he hurried off across the square.

The chemist seemed aware of the omission.

"A trifle unceremonious, our friend the doctor," he smiled. "I've noticed the same thing before in people of mixed blood."

"Mixed blood?" Fraser reiterated.

"Of course; haven't you noticed it? A dash of the tar-brush, that swarthy complexion, beyond a doubt."

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"H'm," Fraser murmured, "perhaps you're right. Must be a bit of a handicap to him in his profession if it's generally realised."

"Oh," was the disagreeable reply, "it's realised all right."

Then all at once he ceased to gossip and became the man of business.

"What was it you said you wanted, sir?"

Fraser hadn't yet said he wanted anything, but he made a trifling purchase and departed.

"An interesting subject, that of mixed blood," he reflected as he went along.

As it happened he encountered Ailing again. The doctor showed every sign of meaning to avoid him, but Fraser planted himself squarely in his path.

"There was something I meant to ask you, Doctor. Been to London lately?"

Ailing stared at him morosely. There was a tiny nerve, the inspector noticed, twitching at the corner of his eyelid.

"Yes," he snapped after a lengthy pause. "Why?"

"The day before yesterday?"

Ailing, after further hesitation, nodded.

"On important business?"

This time anger and fear were plainly manifest in the other's eyes.

"What the blazes has that got to do with you?" he almost shouted. "You mind your own concerns and I'll mind mine."

He pushed by Fraser and strode away.

The Scotland Yard man stood watching his almost headlong departure.

"Rattled," he told himself. "I wonder why?"

NEXT day Fraser motored up to Town himself. After calling at the Yard, where he supplemented his periodical written reports on the case with a verbal one, he put in hand certain inquiries with the approval of his chiefs. Then, for the first time since proceeding to Brimley Parva he allowed himself a little relaxation. After telephoning her of his arrival, he drove out to Wimbledon and had tea with his wife.

Every time he saw Mary after an absence from her it struck him that she looked younger than before. She was still the slim, fair-haired girl he had wooed and won under such romantic and exciting circumstances.

She greeted him with her usual quiet affection and asked eagerly how his case was progressing.

"It's about time you came home," she told him; "I've been a grass widow long enough. Do you know that this is the first of your big cases in which I haven't been with you to hold your hand?"

"And a jolly good job, too," he answered, "considering the mischief you got in before. A few more adventures like you had at Selsbury and in Essex and my hair would turn grey. Besides, I want to solve this one myself. You helped me at Selsbury, and Kerle at Risefield. It's up to me to show I can do something on my own.

"You've shown that often enough already," she said indignantly. "That's the worst of you, Geoffrey; you do four-fifths of the work and then give all the credit to someone else."

Slyly he tweaked her ear. "Well, my dear, I can tell you in confidence that there'll be a spot of credit attaching to me if I bring this off. How does Chief Inspector Fraser sound?"

She clapped her hands.

"Oh, Geoffrey, really? But how splendid!"

"Yes, if it comes off. It doesn't do to count one's chickens too soon, and the case isn't over yet."

"How's it going on?"

"On the surface, not too well. As you know, there are a couple of murders still unsolved, not to mention a suicide more or less connected with them. But below the surface—well, I'm hopeful. I can't say more than that."

"You'll solve it. I know you will. Then you'll be the youngest chief inspector at the Yard, and I'll be able to give myself all sorts of airs."

"THE last thing you'll give yourself, if I know you, old girl. By the way, Sydney Kerle sends you his salaams. Curious I should run up against him again, wasn't it?"

"How is he?"

"A bit subdued and in the background—for him. The case hasn't given him any scope yet for that uncanny pistol practice of his, and personally I hope it won't. I'm all for a quiet life these days."

"Poor old fellow! You'll vegetate. You'd better let me come along and stir you up."

"Heaven forfend. My experience is that when you put in an appearance on a case, life becomes too hectic for words. You stay where you are and leave me in my country furrow."

"Ungrateful pig! If I didn't want to be Mrs. Chief Inspector I'd hope you made a mess of your case and had to call me in. Anyway, I insist on a celebration if you do manage to scrape through unaided."

"You shall have it, my child. Under those circumstances I'll probably feel like celebrating myself."

The badinage proceeded, interspersed with more serious conversation, and Fraser drove back to Brimley Parva braced and encouraged by the belief in him which underlay Mary's flippant raillery. He had long ago learnt the real depth of the personality which that flippancy concealed.

No sooner had he reached the Crown and Anchor than the mystery protruded itself on him again. Awaiting him was a letter, addressed in the now familiar capitals.

"This correspondence is becoming fast and furious," he muttered as he tore it open.

"I told you," he read, "to go back to London. My work is done, but if necessary I can find more to do. Take warning from Patience and Hubert.

"The Avenger (now The Avenged)."

Fraser read it through a second time. "I wonder," he murmured, "if Dr. Ailing has been to town again."

As previously, the postmark was "London, W.1."

While undressing in his room at the Crown and Anchor that night, Fraser went to his bedroom window and looked out.

For a country inn the view was not inspiring. There was, in fact, no country to be seen. The window merely gave on to a courtyard, surrounded with what had once been stables and now were garages. Chained in the yard, moreover, was an Airedale dog, quiet normally, but guaranteed to bark if any unauthorised person approached.

The room, one would have thought, ought to have satisfied the most nervous person, but strangely enough the Scotland Yard man appeared dissatisfied. He was, and for a peculiar reason.

"The trouble about this place," he muttered, "is that it's so infernally difficult to burgle—there isn't even a pipe running up anywhere near this room. And if one does get in there are too many people on the premises—the landlord, Barnes, the boots, several women, and myself, not to mention the dog. Most discouraging prospect for any enterprising housebreaker—I'm afraid I'll have to move."

Next morning, therefore, he strolled over to Sydney Kerle at Rose Cottage and suggested that they changed places.

"Whatever for?" asked that astonished man.

Fraser handed him "The Avenger's" latest epistle, and Kerle read it and frowned.

"But this is a direct threat, Fraser. Surely you'll be safer where you are?"

"That's just the point—I'm too safe. I want to bring this fellow out into the open, make him show his hand."

"All very well, old chap, but you've got to remember that 'The Avenger's' dangerous; he's got a couple of murders to his credit as it is. I tell you what—you doss down here with me, and we'll await what turns up together. We hunted in couples over that last affair. Why not now?"

"Because," was the grave reply. "I'm quite serious when I say it might spoil everything unless I am alone."

"If you're determined to go on your own, I suppose you must," the other grumbled, "but I warn you that if I hear any shooting I shall be over in a flash."

A WEEK went by without any untoward occurrence, and then Fraser, as if wearying of inaction, got out the car and drove up to London, going straight to a certain street in the East End.

There he entered the shop of a herbalist, being greeted by a grave, grey-bearded Indian, in whose back room he was closeted for half an hour while a Parsee youth looked after the shop.

When he left the old Indian accompanied him to the door, gazing after him in reflective fashion. Then, with a word to the youth to remain where he was, he retired once more to the inner room, where he busied himself with pen, ink, and paper. In his native tongue he wrote a letter, which, translated, read as follows:—

"Dear Sir,

"As a well-wisher who has guessed your secret, and one of your mother's blood, I beg you beware of the man Fraser from Scotland Yard, who also is drawing near the truth. May your future activities be resolute and far-sighted, and may success attend them.

"The Avenger's Friend."

He smiled as he slipped this missive into an envelope and stuck it down.

"So," he murmured, "is a man's cleverness over-borne by a man more clever."

He carried the letter to the post himself.

To Fraser that night lying alone in the darkness, Rose Cottage seemed extremely quiet. Often the countryside is not so undisturbed as it is painted. One hears the lowing of cattle, the bark of a dog, the distant whistle of a train, the rumble of night traffic along the roads, even nowadays the hum of aeroplanes overhead.

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But just now none of these sounds broke the silence. It was little after eleven o'clock; but eleven in a country village off the main road is a very late hour. Brimley Parva—or the bulk of it—rose early. It also retired to bed early. There was, as a matter of fact, nothing else to do.

So Fraser, lying under the coverlet with straining ears, knew that he would catch any unusual sound. Although he had apparently retired to rest in the usual way, actually he was partially dressed, save that for the sake of appearances he wore a pyjama jacket instead of a shirt, and had draped his spare underclothes artistically about the room.

The spring nights were now a little warmer, which perhaps was just as well, seeing that Fraser's bedroom window had been left wide open. Also he appeared to have been a trifle careless downstairs. The front door was locked, but one of the casement windows of the sitting-room was open. He hoped that Chubb wouldn't be walking by night again, and, conscientious officer that he was, knock him up to remedy the omission.

Was there or was there not a sound from the sitting room below? Fraser fancied that there was, and slipped his hand for reassurance under the pillow which covered his loaded automatic. Despite his essential coolness, he felt the quickened beating of his heart.

One stair, and one only, creaked, as he had discovered from experiment, and with every sense alert he lay waiting for the signal that someone was ascending the stairs.

By and by it came, a faint noise, stifled instantly, as the intruder's foot was withdrawn to the next step. But it was sufficient to warn the listening man that soon the trespasser would be in the room.

Lying perfectly still, he faced the door that he could sense rather than see. Even so, he did not hear it open. Only some inner perception warned him that there was someone in the room.

The attack when it came was so sudden that he could not use his automatic. A dim, dark form materialised from nowhere, or so it seemed. He felt a noose being slipped deftly over his head.

It was this that compelled him to use two hands, leaving his weapon for the time being where it was. Once that deadly noose was round his throat he knew that he would be doomed—there would be no bungling, as in the case of Amelia Cartwright and Kerle. Just one fiendish jerk, and then—oblivion.

Grasping the cord, therefore, he wrenched it from his head. Then he sprang from the bed and grappled with the intruder.

It was now that he received his second surprise. The figure that he grasped might have been an eel, or even a gigantic pat of butter. It squirmed and slithered noiselessly, just as Fraser's hands slithered when they tried to get a hold. Finally it slid from his grip, pushed him back violently across the bed, and was gone.

Pausing only long enough to drag his pistol from beneath the pillow, Fraser sprang up and started in pursuit. There was no sign of his attacker when he reached the stairs, and he knew he must have gained the sitting-room and be making his escape via the open window. He himself made for the front door, turned the key, and charged out into the night.

He did not get far. Almost immediately his rubber-shod feet shot from beneath him, and he landed heavily on his back, striking his head with sufficient force to stun him on the crazy pavement of the path.

But just before he lost consciousness he heard a shot.

SYDNEY KERLE was bending over him when he came round. "Thank goodness," the lame man said when Fraser opened his eyes. "I was afraid you were badly hurt."

"A bump on the head, that's all," Fraser grimaced. "Did you see the fellow I was after?"

"Yes, I did." Self-disgust was evident in Kerle's voice. "Saw him leaping out of that window like a black shadow, and knowing he could have been up to no good, took a pot-shot at him. And I missed. Ye gods, I missed!"

Fraser gave a shaky laugh. "Well, it's something to know you're human with a pistol, Kerle, after all. I didn't think it was possible for you to miss. Did you notice anything peculiar about the chap?"

"Yes, more than one. His agility, in the first place, secondly his color—he seemed black, or nearly so—thirdly, I'm much mistaken if he wasn't practically stark naked."

"Ah," said Fraser, "I thought as much, and his body oiled. But you probably weren't near enough to see that."

"No, I wasn't. But if you don't mind my saying so, you seem to be sitting in a pool of oil or something of the kind."

Fraser shifted uncomfortably, and then with Kerle's aid scrambled to his feet.

"That's what I slipped up on," he declared; "put there for the very purpose, no doubt. I don't seem to have come off very well in the battle of wits to-night."

"I wish I'd winged the fellow," Kerle said regretfully, "but he moved like greased lightning; here one moment and gone the next. He just shot into that clump of bushes there, and then I expect into that coppice and disappeared. Then you emerged and distracted my attention."

"Yes, I appear to have made a thorough mess of things. But, look here, I thought I gave you orders not to interfere to-night?"

Kerle grinned in the darkness. "Nor I did until too late," he said. "But if you thought I was going to lie peacefully in my little bed all night and let you be garrotted or something of the kind, you were much mistaken. As it was, it seems to have been a near go."

"Oh, well," said Fraser, "we'll argue about that later. Too much time has been wasted already. I'm going after that chap."

"But, my dear fellow, you don't know who he is or where he's gone."

"Don't I?" said Fraser. "Then I'm going to guess. Also, I'm going to get out my car."

"Well, take your pistol as well," Kerle advised, picking it up from the path where it had fallen.

Thrusting it into his trouser pocket, Fraser took the other's arm, and they walked through the little garden and into the road beyond. There they turned towards the Crown and Anchor garage, where the inspector kept his car.

Scarcely had they passed through the garden gate, however, when their attention was attracted by something that heaved and groaned on the grass across the road, close by the coppice into which Kerle believed Fraser's assailant to have vanished.

"By Jove," the lame man muttered, "I believe I hit him after all."

They crossed the road, and Kerle turned an electric torch on to a man who seemed to relax into fresh insensibility on their arrival.

It was Dr. Ailing.

"You'll have to stay and look after him," Fraser said crossly, "and ask him what the devil he's doing here, and how he came to get knocked out. Take him into the cottage when he comes round. That man's a mystery."

Kerle appeared about to make some comment, and then, scenting Fraser's impatience, refrained.

"All right," he said shortly. "Get on with your joy-ride."

Fraser hurried into the garage and got out the car.

He wasted no time covering the five miles into Franchester, and as he tore along his similar previous rush when he and Barnes had found Dr. Ailing knocked off his cycle by the roadside inevitably occurred to him. Now again he had been discovered in a similar predicament. A queer fish, Ailing, and singularly unfortunate in some ways, it would seem.

But it was not with Ailing that his thoughts were primarily occupied. Slipping through the sleeping streets of Franchester, he pulled up outside the pharmacy of Thomas Sinclair and rang the bell. His eyes glittered as he glanced up at the flat windows above the shop.

A constable on duty in the square, too far off to recognise him, eyed him curiously and came strolling up. In a few words Fraser divulged his identity, and the man saluted and walked on. Then a light appeared in one of the flat windows, and to Fraser's secret surprise Sinclair's head emerged.

"Hullo," he asked in his clipped, sing-song accents. "Who is that?"

Fraser gave his name, and in a low voice went on to explain that he had had a slight accident, and would be glad of the chemist's help.

"A slight accident, Mr. Fraser? I am sorry to hear that. I will be down at once."

In a moment or two, clad in vivid red pyjamas and a dressing-gown, he admitted the inspector.

"This accident," he asked, "what is it?"

"I slipped on my garden path," Fraser explained, "and bumped the back of my head. Perhaps you can apply something to take down the swelling?"

"By all means. But it is curious, is it not, that you should come all the way into Franchester for this small assistance when you have Dr. Bathurst in Brimley Parva?"

"Yes, I must apologise for knocking you up, but I had to come over here on duty, and my head is really feeling a bit painful. Had you been in bed long?"

"About an hour." Was there a note of mockery, Fraser asked himself, in the bland accents? "I had just got off to sleep when you rang. But it is no matter. I am delighted to be of service."

He examined the inspector's head, which did, in fact, boast of a swelling as the result of its encounter with the paving, by the light of the hall lamp.

"You had better come upstairs," he invited. "The shop is closed, but I have all the paraphernalia I shall want in my room."

Fraser, as he glanced round the bedroom, thought that he understood this move. It was so that he could see Sinclair's neatly piled underclothes and the bed ruffled, just as he had sprung from it to answer the bell's summons.

"How," the chemist inquired, as he dressed the hurt, "did you come to slip?"

"How does one come to slip?" was the laughing rejoinder. "I was down on my back before I knew it."

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"There," said Sinclair when he was finished, "I've bathed it with boracic, and that ought to bring the swelling down—the skin's not broken. A wet compress on it would help if you don't mind going back like a wounded hero."

"Heavens, no," said Fraser. "I don't want any bandages. I'm sure what you've done will put things right. Many thanks, and once more my apologies for getting you out of bed."

"Don't mention it," was the polite reply. "Good night, and be careful—not to slip again."

"Not if I can help it," Fraser laughed, and once more asked himself if the last slightly accentuated words were to be taken at more than their face value.

The chemist insisted on accompanying him to the doorstep and watching him drive away. Just beyond the purlieus of the square the inspector saw the constable who had previously accosted him and pulled up.

"I am anxious," he stated, "to prove whether Mr. Sinclair has been indoors for the past hour. Do you happen to have been paying any particular attention to his premises?"

"Yes, sir, as it happens I have. Since that chap tried to raid his till we've kept an eye on them. Speaking for myself, I should say Mr. Sinclair has been in since ten o'clock. I saw the light come on in his upstairs room about then—as you probably know, he lives alone in that flat above the shop. It was on for about half an hour and then went out. Did you find him undressed, sir?"

Fraser nodded..

"Then there's no doubt about it, sir. I've had the door under observation all the while—there's no back entrance—and no one's come out."

"Thanks," Fraser answered, "that's what I wanted to know. Keep this conversation to yourself."

He drove on towards Brimley Parva, more slowly than he had travelled the reverse direction, his face hard and sombre. His calculations, he had to admit, appeared to have badly gone astray.

But, could he have witnessed Sinclair's demeanour after his departure, he would have been intrigued. Slowly, his lips moving soundlessly, the chemist ascended to his bedroom. There he seized the bandage Fraser had rejected and tore it fiercely into shreds.

GARAGING his car with as little noise as possible Fraser walked over to Rose Cottage, where he found Kerle and a revived Dr. Ailing discussing the events of the evening over a whisky-and-soda. The mellowing influence of the drink notwithstanding, the doctor appeared to be in an extremely bad temper.

"Oh, there you are," he growled as the inspector walked in; "I was just asking Kerle if I was expected to sit up all night until you chose to arrive, and he had the cheek to tell me that I was. You police seem to think you own the earth!"

"Nice polite little gentleman, isn't it?" Kerle sneered with profound distaste.

"Really?" Ailing snarled. "Perhaps you're not aware what an offensive little squirt you are yourself. Anyway, I've had enough of you. I'm going home."

He rose to his feet, but Fraser thrust out a detaining hand.

"Not yet," he said suavely. "There are one or two questions I'd like to ask you first."

"Oh, are there? You are aware, of course, that there is no obligation for me to answer them?"

"As to that you must please yourself. I would only point out that they may be asked you in another place later on?"

"Is that a threat?"

"No," Fraser said sharply, "you know it isn't—merely a statement of fact."

The doctor appeared to give this consideration.

"Go on," he said surlily at last. "What d'you want to know?"

"First of all, who laid you out outside?"

Ailing laughed unpleasantly. "The devil, or someone uncommonly like him," he declared. "Believe it or not, it was a black man, more or less unclothed. He suddenly appeared like old Nick and hit me over the head while I was still asking myself whether he was real or not—and that's the truth, though you won't believe it."

"I'm quite prepared to credit it," Fraser said quietly, to his obvious surprise. "That brings me to my second question: What were you doing in this neighborhood at all?"

"Coming to see you, if you want to know."

"What, at eleven o'clock at night?"

"Why not? You're not a country bumpkin like the rest of them round here, are you? At all events you were evidently up and doing or you wouldn't have found me."

FRASER let this pass.

"Very well, you were coming to see me. What for?"

"All right, keep your hair on! I came over to know if you were really in earnest about what you said to Sinclair and me the other day—that you were on the track of whoever killed Patience Cartwright and Colonel Warman. Were you?"

The two men stared at him. "You seriously assert you came over specially late at night to ask me that?" Fraser queried.

"No," the other snapped, "I didn't say anything of the kind. I had another medical case near here. So being close to you, I thought I might as well call on you and find out. It's mighty important to me."

"Why?"

"Because I've got a bet on it—a hundred quid to a pound—that the murderer will never be found. So if you're right I stand to lose a tidy packet I can't afford—I shall find it devilish difficult to pay up, if you must know. That's what upset me so. So be a sport and put me out of my misery."

"What induced you to make this bet?"

The doctor shrugged his shoulders. "Why does one ever make a bet? Because it's in the blood, I suppose—mine at any rate. Am I going to win or lose?"

"Who did you make the bet with?"

"Oh, good Lord, does it matter? A chap called Meredith, a corn dealer; I don't suppose you know him at all. For heaven's sake stop asking questions and answer mine."

"Very well, I will—I don't know."

Ailing stared. "You don't know? But you said——"

"That was the other day. Now—I'm being quite candid—I don't know."

Ailing looked faintly relieved. "So I stand to save my money after all!" he exclaimed. "That's good! I don't care two hoots about Patience Cartwright and old Warman, to be candid in my turn, but saving my pocket is another matter."

"I see." Fraser regarded him with distaste. "Then if that's all you came for I suggest you clear off so that we can all get to bed. I take it you cycled over? Where's your cycle, by the way?"

Curiously enough, Ailing seemed more put out by this question than by any other.

"Outside," he answered vaguely. "I know where to put my hand upon it. But what about that black chap who knocked me out? Aren't you going to do anything about him? I could have sworn, as a matter of fact, that he came from the garden of this house. It's not too good to think of a half-naked maniac roaming about the countryside."

"I very much doubt if he's a maniac," Fraser said coldly, "and I'm open to bet that he's no longer half-naked. You may rest assured, however, that he will occupy quite a lot of my attention in the future."

Ailing muttered something inaudible, and the three of them went out, the doctor producing his cycle with rather a sheepish air from the place where he had evidently hidden it among the trees. Fraser watched him critically as he mounted it and rode off without a word of farewell.

THERE being no telephone at Rose Cottage, the Boots was sent over next morning from the Crown and Anchor to inform Fraser that he was wanted on the line.

It proved to be Superintendent Cross, and his voice sounded quite thrilled.

"I say," he said, "a queer thing's happened. Sinclair, one of the local chemists, has come along to me with an extraordinary letter he's received. It's in some sort of native lingo, but he's got it translated somewhere, and has brought me the result. As you happen to be mentioned in it, I think you ought to see it."

"Ought I? It's come along about twenty-four hours too late, hasn't it?"

Cross was evidently nonplussed. "What on earth do you mean?" he demanded. "I don't understand."

"No, you couldn't. You haven't had naked black men trying to throttle you, have you? That kind of thing does give one a different point of view."

The surprise in Cross' tone changed to austerity. "What on earth are you talking about now?" he snapped. "Trying to be funny? If so, don't; I don't like it. And please report here at once."

He slammed down the receiver and Fraser smiled. "Ticked off," he murmured. "I'm afraid one is inclined to forget sometimes that these chaps are one's superior officers. Serves me right for forgetting my place!"

All the same he could not forgo further mystification of the superintendent when they met.

"Read that," Cross ordered, in a sharp tone that still marked his displeasure at what he considered the Scotland Yard man's levity, "and tell me what you make of it."

Without glancing at the paper, Fraser looked at him and grinned wickedly.

"I'll tell you what's in it before reading it, if you like," he offered, "roughly, that is. It's from a well-wisher who warns our friend Sinclair of that nasty piece of work Inspector Fraser, and tells him to mind his step. It also wishes him more power to his elbow and is signed, 'The Avenger's Friend.'"

Cross' jaw dropped. "How on earth do you know that?" he stuttered. "Has Sinclair been along to you?"

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"No, although I confess there was a moment when I thought he had."

"Thought he had? I wish you wouldn't talk in riddles. Have you or haven't you seen that paper before?"

Fraser read it slowly:—

"Dear Sir,

"As a well-wisher who has guessed your secret, and one of your mother's blood, I beg you beware of the man Fraser from Scotland Yard, who also is drawing near the truth. May your future activities be resolute and far-sighted and may success attend them.

"The Avenger's Friend."

Fraser smiled complacently.

"Not so far wrong, was I, Sir?"

"You were so dashed near right that you must have seen it before. Where did you?"

"Never, sir, but I admit I—dictated it."

The superintendent stared, and then the blood rushed to his face.

"Dictated it? D'you mean it's a piece of folly, a leg-pull? Because if so, you may be from Scotland Yard, but I'll . . . Explain yourself."

"YES, sir. You see, when I went up to town I had a brain-wave, and dictated this letter to a Parsee acquaintance of mine and told him to send it in the vernacular to our chemist friend."

"But—but why?"

"Because I wanted to see his reactions—our chemist friend's, I mean."

"Well," said Cross ominously, "you've seen them. Like the law-abiding, respectable man he is—he's lived six years in the town, so I ought to know—he brings this letter, of which he can't make head or tail, to the police. What else could you expect?"

"That he would have brought it at least twenty-four hours sooner. Remember I know when it was sent off."

"What's that got to do with it? He probably couldn't make up his mind whether or not to ignore such a preposterous epistle. What induced you to have it sent to him, man? What have Parsees and this talk of blood and these vague innuendoes got to do with him. Why, it's actionable."

"I shall hope to make that clearer later on."

The superintendent snorted.

"And this gibberish about your drawing nearer to the truth and his future activities. 'The Avenger's Friend,' too; the Avenger was the murderer of Colonel Warman. D'you actually connect an inoffensive fellow like Sinclair with him?"

"I was beginning to," Fraser confessed, "until last night."

"Last night! What happened last night?"

"What you took to be an impertinent pleasantry of mine, sir, when I informed you over the phone. A naked, dark-skinned man broke into my bedroom and attempted to strangle me."

"A naked, dark-skinned man?" Cross repeated feebly. "You're being serious? You're not addicted to seeing green lizards or anything of that kind are you, Inspector Fraser?"

"No, sir, or I shouldn't have been sent down to assist you. As it happens I can produce a witness—Sydney Kerle."

"T'chah!" That, or something like it, was Cross's retort. "Kerle!" he went on bitterly. "That little mountebank would see anything you liked, or invent it if he didn't. I shouldn't wonder if he didn't suggest this wildcat scheme of writing to Mr. Sinclair. Confess it! He did."

"There, sir, you're wrong; the idea was entirely mine. And if you don't value Kerle's testimony perhaps you will accept that of Dr. Ailing. The sequence of events last night was as follows: This man got into my room, tried to strangle me, slipped from my grasp when I tackled him—his bare body was oiled—ran out with me in pursuit, was seen and fired at by Sydney Kerle, who missed for once in his life. He then escaped after knocking out Dr. Ailing who blundered into his way."

"How did a man, naked or otherwise, manage to break unheard into the Crown and Anchor?"

"I wasn't at the Crown and Anchor. I was at Rose Cottage—alone."

The superintendent placed his head in his hands.

"In heaven's name, why?"

"Because I expected—in fact I rather aided and abetted an attack."

"You did, did you? Well, it came and you failed to get your man. What did you do then?"

"I motored straight over to Sinclair's flat."

"You motored over to Sinclair's flat. You connected a naked, dark-skinned would-be murderer with this respectable chemist. Well, go on."

Fraser seemed crestfallen. "I found," he admitted that he had been in bed for the past hour."

Cross's big fist crashed upon the table. "And what else," he roared, "did you expect? Instead of phoning me so that I could turn out every available man to hunt down this unclothed lunatic you speak of you fritter away all chance by catching him by acting in this incomprehensible manner. I'm sorry to say, Inspector, that I've never known anything so badly bungled in my life. Poor Sinclair, when he spoke to me this morning seemed completely dazed, and I'm sure I'm not surprised. No, I don't want to hear anything more—I've heard more than enough already. I shall make it my duty to furnish a report of all this to the Chief Constable, and I've no doubt he will take what steps he thinks fit with your chiefs at the Yard. I never did expect miracles from the Yard, but I draw the line at pure unadulterated idiocy."

Fraser withdrew.

There was rather a wicked twinkle in his eye when he got outside.

"All the same," he murmured anxiously, "I wish that certain information I'm expecting would arrive."

He voiced the same desire to Kerle that evening.

"If it doesn't come to-morrow morning," he said, "I shall have to go to town again."

THERE was no post whatever for Fraser in the morning, and immediately after breakfast he got out of the car and set off for London.

Driving through Franchester, he spotted Dr. Ailing hurrying down the street. He looked tired and ill, and Fraser pulled up by the kerb and spoke to him.

"Good-morning, doctor. How are you feeling after last night's excitements?"

"None the better for seeing you," was the sullen reply. "Found out anything about that chap last night? No, I bet you haven't, nor about the fellow who knocked me out before. Well, I've been doing a bit of detecting on my own concerning the latter, and I may have some news to tell you soon."

"Really," the inspector observed with genuine interest. "I'll only be too pleased to hear it if you have. Nothing in the way of a hint, I suppose, you can give me now?"

"No, there isn't. Anything I have to say I'll say in my own time. Where are you off to, may I ask?"

"To London," Fraser told him, contriving to put as much meaning into the words as possible.

He saw the other change color, though he made no comment.

Fraser slipped in his clutch and drove off. "The very sound of London scares him stiff," he reflected. "I'd give a good deal to find out why."

He reached the Yard to discover that he was not in very good odor in that august establishment. In fact, a message was awaiting him to report to the Assistant-Commissioner himself when he arrived.

"You're in for a wigging, my lad," his immediate chief informed him. The C.C. from Franchester has been out for your blood on the phone."

Sir Henry Tallent, although Fraser was reputed to be among his favorites, certainly did not look too amiable when the latter entered his room.

"What's all this about your playing monkey tricks on some respectable chemist fellow?" he asked. "Tate was pretty nearly demanding your head on a charger just now."

He listened carefully to what Fraser had to say, and then shook his head, half in amusement, half in reproof.

"Your methods are a bit unorthodox sometimes, you know. All the same, the proof of the pudding's in the eating, and I'm not prepared to chastise you yet. When do you expect to get this information you speak of?"

"It should be in now, sir. I'm here, in fact, to ginger things up."

"Well, carry on, but go slow until it arrives. You've got to remember that it may not bear out your theory in the way you hope, so don't involve yourself too deeply until you know where you stand. It's always easier to blunder into a morass than to get out unsmirched."

Whereat Fraser took his departure, feeling that the "wigging" might have been a good deal worse.

For the rest of the day he busied himself on this and that, without, he admitted, having much to show for it. Dusk was falling when he started back for Brimley Parva.

HE was about a mile the London side of Franchester when his headlights picked out the figure of a man gesticulating in the roadway.

Pulling up, he found that it was Dr. Ailing.

"I say," the latter exclaimed eagerly, "I've got some news for you. I've been stopping every car for the last half-hour in the hope that it was you."

"Well, here I am at last," the inspector said good-humoredly. "What's all the excitement about?"

"I've discovered the chap who hit me on the head, the first time I mean, when you found me half-way to Franchester."

"You have, have you? That's certainly interesting. Who is it?"

But Ailing, who had quite lost his sullen manner, became mysterious.

"You'd merely laugh at me if I told you, and I shouldn't blame you, because it would sound quite incredible. Look here, I want you to let me get in alongside you and act as guide and I'll take you straight to where

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the fellow hangs out. Leave things to me when we get there, and I'll soon convince you that I'm not talking through my hat."

Fraser eyed him curiously, but it was too dark for him to make out the other's expression.

"Jump up," he said, "but I'd like to know whom it is we're going to see, and his reason for knocking you out on the Franchester road."

"I'd rather not tell you now," the doctor muttered. "I promise you you'll be surprised."

Without pressing him further, in case his new-found mood of confidence disappeared, Fraser restarted the car, and they drove on for half an hour with little more said between them, mostly it seemed to the inspector along cross-country roads and lanes. Ailing, indeed, was fairly well occupied in giving instructions about the route.

"We're getting near," he stated at length, "another five minutes and we'll be there."

In less than that period he called on Fraser to stop.

"We'll have to leave the car here," he said, "and do the rest on foot."

There was tension in his tones, and the Scotland Yard man sensed his excitement.

"This leads to the river," Dr. Ailing almost whispered; "the Thames, of course, near Bray. You'll see a house-boat looming up presently. That's our destination."

A turn of the lane did presently bring them out on the river bank, moored against which Fraser could make out the loom of a house-boat as described by his companion.

It was at that moment that things happened. There came a rush of feet and the inspector saw someone strike at Ailing, who went down without a cry. Before he could do anything either to protect the other or himself, a blow from something heavy crashed upon his own head. Pitching forward, he knew no more.

Half an hour later a boat put off from the house-boat carrying an object wrapped round and weighted with chains. Lifted over the gunwale, it sank with a muffled plunge into the deepest portion of the river.

IT was not until the following morning that Fraser's absence began to court notice. Major Tate rang up the Crown and Anchor and asked for him, and Sydney Kerle hastened over to Rose Cottage to convey the message, to discover to his astonishment that the inspector was not there, and that there was evidence to show that he had not slept in the cottage.

He returned to the telephone with this information, which seemed to annoy Tate. Muttering something about its not being the way to treat a Chief Constable, he rang off and got in touch with the Yard, only to learn that Fraser had started back for Brimley Parva the evening before, and should have arrived there within the hour. That he hadn't done so did not perturb the Yard. Doubtless, they said, his investigations had called him farther afield, and he would communicate with someone in due course.

Local police headquarters were content with this, and it was Kerle who worried most.

When evening came and Fraser had not returned, he rang up the Yard himself and suggested that inquiries should be made.

It did not add to his peace of mind to learn that this was already being done, following the discovery of Fraser's car abandoned in a field twenty miles north of Oxford.

How long Fraser remained insensible he was never quite certain. He came round to find himself lying in pitch darkness, bound hand and foot, and with a gag in his mouth. His head ached abominably and he was very thirsty.

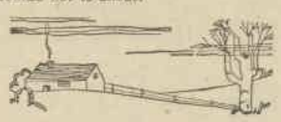
In this condition he remained, it seemed to him, hours, until slowly it began to lighten, and he knew that dawn was at hand. It was broad daylight, however, and he had come to the conclusion that he was on the floor of the house-boat's living-room, before anyone appeared.

Then a tall, dark-skinned man padded into the room. He was obviously an Asiatic, although wearing European clothes, and he stood staring down at Fraser in reflective and sardonic fashion. When he spoke it was in almost perfect English, marred only by the sing-song intonation of his race.

"You are better, sahib? You are not too badly hurt?"

It pained Fraser to do it, but he nodded an affirmative to each of these questions, and the native went on his knee and examined the top of his head. Fraser winced at his touch, but the other appeared satisfied at what he saw.

"It is nothing," he declared. "In a few hours you will have forgotten it. Now, if I remove the gag from your mouth, will you promise not to shout?"



AGAIN the inspector nodded. Shouting, he guessed, at this hour of the morning would avail him little. Moreover, he wanted the chance to converse with his gaoler, whose demeanor did not seem to be unduly hostile.

Next moment, to his inexpressible relief, his mouth was free.

"Water," he muttered with difficulty, for his tongue felt as if it were swollen to abnormal size.

The dark-skinned man retired, returning in a few moments with a glass whose contents tasted like nectar to the captive. Fraser's voice had gained power when he spoke again.

"Thanks; it's too much, I suppose, to ask you to untie me as well?"

The other showed the gleam of remarkably white and even teeth.

"I regret, sahib, it is; at the present juncture at all events. By and by, when you are better, we will talk business—and then we will see."

"I suggest that we talk business, as you call it, here and now. I am a police officer, in case you do not know it, and you'll find it a serious matter——"

The other extended deprecatory hands.

"Where's Dr. Ailing?" Fraser asked sharply. "What's happened to him?"

Again came that deprecatory gesture.

"A thousand regrets, sahib, but I acted under orders. The doctor sahib sleeps—where the river is deep and will not tell the story."

"You mean you've drowned him?"

The native shrugged.

"It was the will of Allah. Let us not trouble about what is of no further importance."

"Good heavens!" Fraser muttered. "I hope you realise you'll swing for this?"

"I think not, sahib," was the soft reply. "If the sahib is wise he will forget my words, which float idly as thistledown upon the air. Let us forget the dead and consider the living. What ransom would the chiefs at Scotland Yard pay for their distinguished confrere?"

"They would pay nothing," Fraser returned with energy. "They will search for me and find me, and it will be those who try to harm me who will pay."

"I think not, sahib. They may search, but they will not find. And of what avail is it to a drowned man if they do? They cannot give back life, the sunshine, and the flowers."

"Perhaps not, but they can hang the murderers."

"If Allah wills. But if the murderers escape, what then? To be found and buried in land instead of in water is poor consolation to the corpse."

He bent over the bound man, and his voice became persuasive.

"Listen, sahib; already, although you do not know it, you owe me much. My orders were to weight your body and consign you to the river, like that other you named just now. He, being of no account, did not escape his fate. But in your case I used subtlety to save your life—a life which should possess great cash value if I receive my deserts. A bundle of rugs rolled round with chains—that was your body which went slithering down into the depths to join that other below. I speak the truth, sahib. Do likewise with me and say what Scotland Yard will pay."

"They will pay nothing, as I told you before," Fraser answered sternly. "Who are these employers of yours you speak of? I want their names."

A gleam of anger and of mockery shone in the dark eyes above him.

"So, the prisoner gives orders, the bound man commands! No, I do not speak, sahib, until we come to terms. You say the police will pay nothing to preserve the life of one of their most eminent members? That seems strange to me, but I will take your word. Then we must become personal. How much is your life worth, sahib, to yourself?"

"This talk of ransom," Fraser snapped, "is nonsense. If what you say is true, your life is already forfeit to the Law; but if you release me and give me the information I desire, I will say what I can for you to my chiefs. Beyond that I cannot and will not go."

"Five hundred pounds, sahib; five hundred English pounds and your word that the police will not proceed against me, and you go free. Otherwise . . ." he jerked his hand in the direction of the river.

"You will not get five hundred pence," Fraser told him, "so you may make up your mind to that. If I'm not mistaken, you are the man who tried to kill me in my cottage a few days ago."

He regretted the words as soon as he had spoken them. Instantly his gaoler's face became set and mask-like, losing all expression.

"You know too much," he muttered. "It is better you should die. Tonight when it is dark again I shall drop you in the river. I was a fool, Allah knows, not to have done it before. Also we must arrange again that you do not call out."

In spite of Fraser's set teeth and the turning and twisting of his head, which was the only resistance he could make, the gag was forced into his mouth again, and fastened there. One shout and one only he was able to emit, his voice sounding hollow and forlorn as it echoed through the house-boat.

It became evident to him as the hours passed on leaden feet that his fear that his solitary call for help had not been heard was only too well-founded. No one came near him—not even his gaoler—although once he thought he caught the sound of voices somewhere on the bank—

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potential rescuers, he wondered, or the native conferring with his principals, whoever they might be?

As he lay there, he revolved everything that had happened since his arrival in Brimley Parva in his mind. Never, he thought, had he known a case with queerer ramifications. The murder of the inoffensive Patience Cartwright, heightened by the sinister figure of Amelia in the background, was so far devoid of explanation in itself. Then had followed the strangling of Colonel Warman and Amelia Cartwright's suicide, accompanied by her "confession" on which so little reliance could be placed. Those letters, too, from "The Avenger" gave it a touch of the bizarre. Who was this Avenger, with two murders to his credit, the instigator no doubt of the attack on Fraser at Rose Cottage and of the ambush into which he and Ailing had fallen the previous night? Ailing, too, appeared and disappeared in the affair in curious fashion—poor chap, he had disappeared for good and all if what the native said was right.

What had he found out which had caused him to be lured to his doom, a doom that Fraser semed destined to share unless help came before nightfall, or he contrived to loosen his own bonds?

The latter contingency appeared even more unlikely than the former, for strain at them as he might the only result was to leave them tighter than before. The knots were skilfully tied, the cord beyond his strength to break.

It was maddening that this should happen at this juncture. In a few days at most he expected to receive information that might point infallibly to the Avenger's identity—and how if it came he might not be alive to receive it. Others would read and act upon it, of course. The criminal would still be run to earth. The machine would not stop because one cog was missing. But, to quote the words of his captor, Fraser could not envisage any vast consolation in that if he himself were dead.

As time dragged on, calculated only by the shifting lines of sunlight which traversed the floor through the edges of the drawn blinds, it became borne upon the prisoner that he was to be given neither food nor drink. The effect of the water he had had in the early morning had long worn off, and thirst attacked him again. He supposed grimly that the Indian did not think it worth worrying about someone who so shortly was to die. At all events he did not come near him again; there was no sound even of his presence on board.

AFTER his day of target practice and his disturbing telephone conversation with Scotland Yard, Sydney Kerle felt that to remain quietly in the Crown and Anchor was more than he could do. He therefore got out the motor cycle, which he still used in preference to a car, and commenced a somewhat aimless ride round the countryside in the vague hope that somewhere or other he might pick up Fraser's trail.

He was not aware of it, but his wanderings had brought within a quarter of a mile of the spot where Fraser was lying. In such desperate straits when a small "elderly" two-seater car emerged from a side road, and turned in the direction of Franchester. It was growing dusk, but Kerle recognised the sole occupant at once as Thomas Sinclair, the Franchester chemist.

Giving the car time to get a decent start, he turned his machine and followed in its wake, confident that his goggles would have prevented Sinclair from recognising him. He soon found that he had to slow down to a pace distasteful to one whose progress was pretty hectic as a rule, but he accepted it as one of the penalties of the game.

It was just as well that he based no high hopes on the outcome of the chase, for it had a tame and disappointing ending. Sinclair drove straight to a garage in Franchester, where, judging from his conversation with one of the hands, he evidently kept his car.

"Will you want it out again tonight, Mr. Sinclair?" the man asked.

The chemist hesitated.

"I don't think so," he answered, "though it's just possible I might. Have it ready for me in case I do."

"It's always ready for you, sir. 'Open day and night's' our motto. Come in at two in the morning and you'll find a man on duty."

Sinclair nodded and walked away, followed at a discreet distance by Kerle, who had delivered up his own machine.

The chemist let himself in to his own premises, and in due course Kerle saw a light go on upstairs.

FRASER awoke from his sleep of exhaustion with the queer feeling that someone had recently been standing and looking down upon him. If so, however, they had gone, and he was as much alone as before he went to sleep. He was quick to realise that daylight was failing and night at hand—the night which promised to mark his exit from this earth.

Lying thus, his morale at its lowest ebb, he heard the chug-chug of a motor-cycle in the distance. Inevitably the association of ideas brought to mind Kerle's machine, and he would almost have been prepared to swear that this was the distinctive beat of Kerle's own engine. As a matter of fact, it was!

So strong was his conviction that against all possibility he attempted to shout, to tell the other where he was, only to desist in utter hopelessness as the noise of the engine died away.

For some time after that he remained sunk in apathy while the darkness gathered and objects in the room of his captivity became less distinct. He would almost have welcomed the sound of the Indian's returning footsteps. At all events they might indicate the shortening of suspense.

It was footsteps and voices that finally roused him—the pattering steps and shrill voices of children. They were on the bank, close to the house-boat, and as far as he could gather a small girl was daring a small boy to go aboard.

Desperately Fraser prayed that the latter's enterprise would cause him to take up his companion's "dare," and that if he came aboard his curiosity would bring him to the detective's prison. The Indian, evidently, was absent; otherwise he would have driven the children off ere this.

Their voices died away and became inaudible, until Fraser with fresh resignation believed that they had gone. He could not tell, of course, that the whisperings of conspiracy had succeeded their previous shrill tones, and when presently he became aware of a curious scraping sound he wondered what it might portend.

Actually it was a board which had given access to the house-boat, and had been removed. Between them, the two children were laboriously dragging it into place. A thud and a yell of delighted laughter as they scampered across testified to their success.

Thereafter it seemed to Fraser that they explored every nook and cranny of the house-boat except the place in which he was immured, and every moment he expected his gaoler to return and chase them from the scene. Hope once more had nearly deserted him when they crept with obvious awe into the darkened room.

So dark had it become, indeed, that at first they did not see him, prostrate as he was in a corner of the floor. The gag prevented him from speaking, and fearful that they would slip out again without noticing him he drummed with his heels upon the boards.

The girl drew towards the boy in evident alarm.

"Jimmy, what's that noise?"

"Rats," he answered stoutly, although there was a quiver in his voice. "I'm not afraid of rats if you are, Joan. Just watch me strike a match and see them run."

From his pocket he produced a box, probably purloined from home. The match scraped across it, and as the flame shot up it showed Fraser two small faces of children of eight or nine gazing at him with astonishment which quickly changed to fear. The match dropped from the boy's fingers and went out upon the floor, and with one accord they turned and tore from the room. Next instant their panic-stricken footsteps sounded on the plank.

"And that," Fraser told himself, "is that!"

The noise of their flight, indeed, had barely died away before Fraser was conscious that there was another presence in the room. This time it did not take him long to guess who it was. The newcomer's stealthy movements, the fact that he allowed the place to remain in darkness, and the manner in which he came over and felt the knots in the prisoner's cords, were convincing evidence that the native had at length returned.

Almost at once he felt himself rolled roughly over and lengths of what he knew to be iron or steel bars bound tightly to his prostrate form. Evidently he was not to be given a second chance to buy his life.

The fixing of these took some time, for the man still worked in darkness, doubtless so that he should not advertise their presence on board. Then he stooped, attempted to lift Fraser in his arms, desisted with a grunt, and commenced to drag him by the feet across the floor.

Thus, sometimes lifting him, more often hauling him, he got his prisoner to the side and dumped him into a dinghy fastened to the house-boat's stern. Stepping gingerly into the tiny craft himself, he slipped the sculls into the rowlocks and pulled out into the river to a spot which had been in his mind's eye all along.

There, with a fiendish chuckle, he heaved his weighted and helpless burden over the side.

He left Sydney Kerle, it will be remembered, kicking his heels outside Sinclair the chemist's door and calling himself all manner of fool for being there at all, instead

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of at the Crown and Anchor, where his supper was doubtless waiting to be devoured.

He was indeed about to push off in disgust when at long last something occurred to break the monotony of his so far fruitless vigil.

A motor-cycle came thumping through the silent square, pulled up a few yards from Kerle and was jacked against the kerb. Its rider, a dishevelled dark-skinned man, crossed the pavement and rang the bell of Sinclair's private door in hesitating fashion, rather, Kerle thought, like the popular conception of a man ringing a dentist's bell and prepared to bolt before the door was opened.

The lame man sauntered on, contriving to keep an eye on proceedings all the same. The newcomer had taken no notice of him, being obviously, too much taken up with his own affairs.

The door opened and the motor-cyclist disappered within, leaving Kerle wishing that he could be present at the ensuing interview.

The meeting of Sinclair and his visitor certainly transcended anything that Kerle was likely to imagine. A certain peculiarity in the ring apprised the chemist of the other's identity before he set eyes upon him. With expressionless eyes he descended the stairs, and opened the door, even then he did not speak, a jerk of his hand indicating that the newcomer was to pass through into the dispensary behind the shop.

The other slid by, cringing and obviously in terror, a fact that the pharmacist was quick to note. His eyes hardened as he followed him and stood, still silent, with folded arms waiting for him to speak.

It was a queer tableau, reminiscent of the rabbit and the snake, the one apparently unwilling to speak, the other unable to find words.

"Well?" the chemist asked at last.

Under his scornful, malignant gaze the new arrival wilted. He was by far the taller man, but the other's dominant personality reduced him to insignificance. He found his tongue at last, and a torrent of words poured from his lips in a language that Kerle would not have understood had he been able to be present.

Sinclair listened, and as the narrative proceeded his dark-hued face grew grey and pinched about the nostrils. Something very terrible gleamed in his eyes.

His hand went out to a whip with a heavy lash that was hanging on the wall, and the other literally went down upon his knees.

"Not that, sahib, not that; I will try again."

Sinclair spoke at last.

"You will try again," he mocked. "You who disobey my orders and smash all my plans. I think not."

He raised the whip.

The native grasped him round the knees. "I shall scream, sahib," he cried desperately. "I shall scream. There is a policeman in the square outside and he will hear me. Listen, sahib, I have a plan."

A little later Sinclair let his visitor out, watching him walk almost jauntily to his machine. Then he went upstairs to the flat and dialled a number on the phone. He spoke for a few minutes, and when he put back the receiver he was smiling.

It was a smile that was rather terrible to see.

Starting his motor-cycle into life, Sinclair's caller chugged away through the town to be followed a moment later by Sydney Kerle, who was careful to keep him in sight as they traversed the winding streets. He had no fear of losing him on the open road.

The rider ahead turned off the road into a narrow lane beyond which lay the blurred mass of a wood. Riding past it, Kerle saw him jacking up his machine on its stand and turning out the lamp.

A slight hill rose from the commencement of the lane and Kerle drove on to the top of this before slowing down and stopping, trusting that the other would think that the sound of his engine had died away in the distance. Then he reversed his machine, set it in neutral, and coasted noiselessly back to the foot of the hill with his own light extinguished.

THE native, he discovered, was still near his cycle, engaged in pumping up one of the tyres which was apparently too soft for his liking. He finished the job while Kerle watched him, replaced the pump, and leaving his machine where it stood, commenced to walk along a narrow path leading into the interior of the wood.

At once Kerle jacked up his own cycle and followed him. Not for the first time, he noticed during that walk how much more eerie a wood is at night than in the daytime.

Kerle crept along carefully and silently, his ears strained to catch any cessation of the footsteps ahead of him. To his relief these did not pause. The native had no inkling, it seemed, that anyone was in his rear.

For ten minutes or so they proceeded thus, until Kerle found himself on the edge of a small clearing in which he could just make out the contours of a hut, which showed a couple of dimly lighted windows. The Indian had made straight for this and was engaged in giving three measured knocks upon the door.

This opened immediately.

"Oh, it's you, is it?" remarked a morose and peevish voice with which Kerle was well acquainted. It was that of Dr. Ailing.

"What in the world is he doing here?" Kerle muttered.

Waiting until the door had closed again he tiptoed across the soft turf of the clearing and applied his ear to the woodwork. He could hear the doctor's grumbling tones.

"I didn't ask you here. I don't want you, so you can get out."

The other's reply was inaudible, but when Ailing spoke again his voice had risen an octave, its surliness mingled with alarm.

"I know nothing of what transpired on the house-boat, remember that. It's entirely your affair what happened there."

The native's laugh was contemptuous.

"Shall I tell you what really did happen?" he inquired.

"No!" It was almost a shout. "I shan't listen; I shall stop my ears. It's got nothing to do with me."

"Hasn't it? In the eyes of the law an accessory . . ."

"Who can call me an accessory? A murderous attack was made upon us, and I escaped. My word, I fancy, would be taken before yours, you black-faced scoundrel.

From the other side of the door Kerle caught the indescribable sound that issued from the Indian's lips on receipt of this insult. It was followed by a significant silence, broken by Ailing's frightened protest.

"Here, what are you doing? I'm sorry; I didn't mean it, I tell you. I didn't mean it. No! No! Help! Oh, help!"

There came the crash of furniture and the sound of the two men struggling, and Kerle lamented the fact that sacking or something of the kind stretched across the windows prevented him from seeing inside. He flung himself at the door, but it was secured from within.

Then, just as he was beginning to believe that another murder might be consummated in which he would be powerless to interfere, it jerked open and Ailing fled outside with the native at his heels. In the light from the opening Kerle saw that the latter carried a noose.

One of Sydney Kerle's attributes was the gift of swift decision. As the Indian rushed past he thrust out his foot, sending him sprawling face downward on the ground.

He was up again in an instant, and transferred his attack to Kerle, only more than to meet his match. A second attribute of Kerle, in spite of his lame leg, was a very adequate knowledge of the fistic art. A swift, stabbing right to the chin put the other on the ground again.

This time the fellow had had enough. He was only courageous when the need for courage was not great. On getting a second time to his feet, he incontinently bolted into the shelter of the trees.

Kerle looked round for Ailing, who had checked his flight at the sight of this unexpected reinforcement.

"Come here," he said grimly. "I want a word or two with you."

Seeing that the other was on the verge of making off, he advanced with surprising swiftness, seized him by the arm in a grip that the doctor vainly tried to break, and hustled him into the hut.

KERLE'S dominant sensation at that moment was one of satisfaction that he appeared to be getting on the track of something that Fraser would be glad to know, that, in fact, he was "putting one over" on the Scotland Yard man, of whose secretive methods in this case Kerle did not approve. Then he recalled that his immediate concern was that Fraser had disappeared, and that while he was listening to it he had wondered whether the conversation in the hut could have any possible bearing on this fact.

"Good evening, Dr. Ailing," he observed with belated and somewhat mocking courtesy: "a bit lucky for you I turned up, eh?"

Sullenly the doctor attempted to express his gratitude.

"Er—yes, thanks very much. That fellow's a dangerous devil when he's roused."

"So it appears. Who is he, by the way?"

"Oh, his name's—er—Brown. He's got some Indian patronymic, I believe, but he doesn't use it over here."

"I see, and why should this Mr.—Brown dislike you so much as to run after you with the evident intention of strangling you?"

Ailing shifted uneasily from one foot to the other.

"Oh, he wouldn't have gone so far as that. But he might have knocked me about a bit. That's why I ran."

"And why should he knock you about, Dr. Ailing?"

The other's self-control, never it would appear very closely in hand, gave way.

"That's my business," he snarled. "What are you doing here?"

"I'm—making investigations," was the deliberate reply. "It would be interesting to know what connection this Mr. Brown has with Sinclair, the chemist, and yourself."

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At Sinclair's name the doctor gave an uncontrollable start. His attempt to prevaricate lacked conviction.

"Sinclair? I don't understand. Why should Sinclair——"

"Brown—you might have thought of a better name than that, Doctor, even on the spur of the moment—was calling on Sinclair earlier this evening. He came straight from him to you. I know, because I followed him."

"Spying, eh?" the other sneered. But there was something akin to panic lurking in his eyes.

"You may call it so, if you like," Kerle agreed equably. "What about that house-boat, Dr. Alling?"

Alling fairly staggered. The fear in his eyes deepened. Then with a supreme effort he pulled himself together.

"I don't know what you mean. You've no right to question me. I refuse to say another word."

"In that case," Kerle retorted, "I will do the talking. I wonder if I should be very far from the mark if I identified our friend Mr. Brown with Inspector Fraser's midnight assailant? If I am right in that surmise it seems curious, to say the least, that he should be on terms of acquaintanceship with Sinclair and yourself."

"You are talking," Alling maintained "absolute drivel."

"That's as maybe. For the present I prefer to work out my own solution. One recalls, too, that Patience Cartwright and Colonel Warman were both strangled and that this so-called Mr. Brown chased you with a noose in his hand. One might put two and two together there."

"And make five," Alling sneered. His face was still white and strained like that of a man who has received a severe shock, but he seemed to be recovering some of his confidence. He did not maintain it long.

"Possibly. You may have better reason to know than I. But we will leave that point for the moment and touch on another. For the past day and a half nothing has been seen or heard of Inspector Fraser, a queer and disturbing fact in itself. And in this connection I was interested in your conversation with Mr. Brown which I was privileged to overhear Dr. Alling, what happened on the house-boat?"

As if that ill-omened word was a talisman that could prick the bubble of his self-conceit, all Alling's newly-found assurance deflated on the instant, leaving him once more a prey to obvious fear. Watching him, Kerle himself was conscious of disquietude on Fraser's account. His tone sharpened.

"Answer me, man! To what were you accused of being an accessory?"

The doctor passed his tongue across his lips.

"Nothing," he declared.

He's lying, Kerle reflected. Aloud, he said:

"This house-boat, is it far away?"

"About—about ten minutes' walk."

"Then," Kerle announced, "we're going there at once."

The other drew back.

"No," he muttered, "I don't want to go. I won't go. There's no reason why I should."

Kerle took him by the arm. "We're either going to this house-boat," he declared, "or to the police. There's something here I don't understand, and I'm going to get to the bottom of it. Come along!"

For a moment it looked as if Alling would show fight. Then he shrugged his shoulders with an assumption of nonchalance.

"Oh, very well, if you insist, and seeing it's such a short distance away. If you're set on acting the fool, I can't help it."

For Kerle that second walk through the wood contained possibilities of trouble that were absent from the first.

He kept his senses more alert, therefore, than even they had been on the first occasion, making the doctor walk in front of him to guard against any treachery from that quarter.

Alling, as a matter of fact, was noticeably ill at ease himself, his eyes darting from side to side as if he too expected the Indian to materialise at any moment to his own undoing. From the pace he set his chief idea was to get out of the wood as soon as possible.

They achieved this in a surprisingly short time, emerging on to the river bank at the opposite edge of the wood to that from which Kerle had entered it. Away to the left, halfway across a small meadow, he made out the loom of a solitary house-boat.

"Is that our destination?" Kerle inquired.

"Yes," was the doctor's curt reply, as he continued towards it at the same rapid rate. Having been forced to embark upon it, he seemed desirous of getting the distasteful business over as quickly as he could.

KERLE, as they went along, endeavored to get as much of the landscape fixed in his mind as the darkness would allow, in case he wished to find the place again. He marked the wood to his left, the river on his right, away half-left two cottages dimly seen. Then he found himself at the gangway of the house-boat.

It was with mixed emotions that he followed Alling aboard. In some respects that lonely craft appeared even more sinister than the wood, the very place, he thought, where the native might be lurking. Once again the futile regret seized him that he was unarmed.

In his waistcoat pocket he invariably carried a tiny flashlight, and it was by the light of this that he made his inspection of the craft. In the living-room something that glinted in its rays attracted his attention, and he stooped and picked it from the floor. It was a small silver pencil-case which had rolled into a crevice.

Kerle recognised it at once as belonging to Geoffrey Fraser, a present from his wife, and if it proved anything at all it was that the inspector must once have been on board. Kerle drew in his breath, but for the moment offered no comment on his discovery.

The beam of the little light continued to travel across the floor, and suddenly the hand holding it shook. It had picked up the ominous stain left by Fraser's wounded head.

At the same instant a sound indicative of consternation broke from Alling's lips and Kerle turned the light upon his face. Renewed terror was impressed upon it, more than that—the stamp of guilt.

Kerle's imagination forthwith leaped to dreadful things. Thrusting the lamp into his pocket, he seized the doctor by the throat.

Sydney Kerle was wont to state grimly later that not until he felt Alling's throat between his hands did he realise how easy it was to commit murder.

Convinced that Fraser had been the victim of foul play, all his liking and admiration for him surged up at that moment, and he shook the doctor until he in his turn must have felt certain that he had only escaped the Indian's noose to perish at the hands of Kerle. Uttering sounds that were half a gasp and half a bleat, he struggled vainly to free himself, until at length his writhings ceased and he went limp.

This brought Kerle to his senses. Lowering the other to the floor he somewhat anxiously turned the light upon him, to nod after a moment's inspection in satisfied fashion.

"Still alive," he muttered.

It was not long before the doctor's eyelids switched and his eyes opened to meet the dazzling beam of the light. They closed quickly again, but not before Kerle saw the old scared expression come back and one of his hands raised to his throat.

"It's all right, Doctor," he said in his normal voice. "I'm not going to assault you again. But when you feel up to it we must have a talk."

The battery in his lamp was showing signs of exhaustion, so he turned it off in order to conserve what current was left for an emergency.

"Now, Doctor," he asked, "what do you know about that stain?"

There was a long silence, and then Alling's voice, weak but obstinate.

"Nothing," he declared.

"That," said Kerle, "is a lie. You were scared stiff when you saw it. It suggested something to you that gave you the jitters at the thought that I, too, had come across it. My friend Geoffrey Fraser is missing. Has that stain—I should say it was blood—got anything to do with him?"

"No."

"How can you tell, if you know nothing about it?"

"It can't have anything to do with him. Why should Fraser come here?"

"He has been here, I tell you. That pencil-case I picked up just now belongs to him. Do you know where he is?"

"No."

"Have you set eyes on him, either yesterday or to-day?"

"No."

Kerle's teeth clenched.

"What is this connection between you, Brown, and Sinclair?" he demanded. "You can't deny that, at any rate."

There was another long pause, and somehow he formed the idea that the doctor was even nearer breaking-point than he had imagined. But just as he was hoping that he might be induced to tell something worthwhile at last, there came an interruption. The board forming the gangway to the house-boat creaked. They heard the slither of stealthy feet.

"Does that," Kerle murmured, "mark our black-faced friend's return, I wonder?"

THE native, after his rout by Kerle in the hut, lurked for a while among the trees as if contemplating an attack on one or both of its inmates should they emerge. But respect for the lame man's unexpected strength and prowess with his fists proved a deterrent that in the end was more potent than his desire for revenge. Opportunity for the latter might come later.

Disconsolately he wandered off into the fields.

He was a considerable distance from the house-boat when on looking back towards

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REVENGE AT NIGHTFALL

it he caught the glimmer of a light behind the drawn blinds of the room in which Fraser had lain.

"The doctor," he murmured, "hiding in there for the night."

He turned and with an evil glint in his eyes retraced his steps. The noose was swinging from his fingers when he reached the gangway plank.

This as has been said, creaked under his weight, but although the light had gone out in the living-room he had no reason to think he had been heard. A few strides took him to the doorway, where he checked himself and listened.

At Kerle's muffled query whether it was the native who had returned Ailing shrank away.

"Don't let him get hold of me," he whispered; "he'll kill me if he does."

"Be quiet!" Kerle whispered back.

On tiptoe he crept across the floor to a spot where, if it were opened, he would be behind the door.

It was opened. All the newcomer had heard was Ailing's agitated breathing. It did not appear to him that there was more than one man in the room.

He was still of this impression when a torch in his disengaged hand showed him the doctor's cowering form. He chuckled maliciously, and took a step in his direction.

"Now," he said in his clipped, sing-song tones, "we'll resume our interrupted conversation."

Knowing the kind of man with whom he had to deal, Kerle did not trouble to study the niceties of combat. He swung his fist at the angle of the other's jaw, and swung it hard. Had it connected properly, it would undoubtedly have been a knockout blow. Unfortunately, however, at the crucial instant the fellow slightly changed direction, and although the blow landed it was a glancing one. He staggered, had his torch knocked out of his hand by Kerle, and then the two men closed.

Now at anything in the wrestling way Kerle had once been a past-master, and even with the handicap of his injured leg his knowledge of jiu-jitsu stood him in good stead. In a few moments he had achieved a hold which caused his taller, heavier opponent to cry out with pain, and with only a slight shifting of his grip he had him helpless.

"Now, my lad," he grated, "you're going to get wet."

Swinging him round, he ran the native through the doorway to the water's edge. A heave into which he put all his strength landed him into the river with a mighty splash—for the second time that evening, if Kerle had only known it—and the profane language which floated back to his ears as the other swam ashore merely added to his pleasure.

Watching his late antagonist climb up the bank and disappear, he half-turned to go back to the living-room when something unexpected crashed upon his head and struck him to the floor. He had underestimated the capabilities of Dr. Ailing—for treachery at all events. Directly he presented his back to the doctor to hurl the native overboard, the former had picked up a chair and followed noiselessly behind him. Waiting only until he saw the Indian in full flight, he brought this down on Kerle's unprotected skull. Then he dropped the chair and raced across the gangway.

It was a couple of minutes before Kerle sat up, ruefully rubbing his head. The chair, one leg broken, lay on the deck beside him.

"Treacherous little blighter," he murmured. "He could only have caught me a glancing blow, or things might have been worse. I wonder where he's vamoosed? Just as I was thinking I was going to get something out of him at last!"

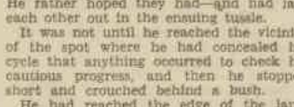
He rose stiffly and groggily and directly his head cleared commenced an inspection of the houseboat by the failing light of his little lamp. No further discovery rewarded him, and he came to the conclusion that there was now no point in his staying there any longer.

"It's back to the old motor bike for Sydney," he decided, "and then a word in the ear of Superintendent Cross—and I bet he'll come to the conclusion that I'm pulling his leg."

He limped ashore, made his way across the fields, and then through the wood. The hut, which he peered into as he passed, was empty, and he speculated whether Ailing and "Mr. Brown" had met again. He rather hoped they had—and had laid each other out in the ensuing tussle.

It was not until he reached the vicinity of the spot where he had concealed his cycle that anything occurred to check his cautious progress, and then he stopped short and crouched behind a bush.

He had reached the edge of the lane, and in it he made out a car and the sound of lowered voices.



SINCLAIR, immediately after putting through his telephone call at the close of the native's visit, had donned hat and coat and set off for the all-night garage in which he kept his car.

The chemist climbed into the driving-seat, and proceeded sedately through the narrow streets of the town. Once free of them he quickened his pace until he reached the lane by the wood where Sydney Kerle had concealed his motor cycle. Turning into this, he stopped the car, and sat waiting.

He had not been there long when the Indian glided from the bushes, and they commenced to talk in a language that Kerle, who realised he must have been close behind the native, could not understand, although he recognised Sinclair's sing-song tones. The conversation lasted only a few minutes, and then the dark-skinned man flitted noiselessly away, passing so close to the listener's hiding-place that the latter held his breath. For another moment or two the chemist sat still as if in thought before commencing to back his car into the road.

Kerle let him get fairly started, and then broke cover and raced to the chimp of bushes in which he had hidden his cycle. To his profound relief it was still there, evidently undiscovered and unharmed, for the engine burst into life at the second thrust of the kick-starter. Careless whether the native heard him or not, Kerle, without turning on his headlight, followed in Sinclair's wake.

"One's certainly seeing life tonight," he muttered, unaware that for him the real grim business of the evening had not yet begun.

THE two children who had discovered Fraser in the houseboat proved to be of sterner fibre than he had given them credit for. In spite of their panic they had realised quite well what had frightened them, and that it would have to be dealt with by someone older than themselves. There was no thought of concealment when they burst into their home.

"Daddy, Daddy," Jimmy cried, "there's a man tied up in the old houseboat!"

"And there's blood on his head," Joan supplemented.

James Meighan regarded them severely. "Haven't I told you not to go prying about on houseboats?" he demanded. "It's like walking into other people's houses, that's what it is. But what's all this about a man?"

Gaspingly, with wide eyes, they told him, and when they had finished he rose to his feet.

"Best give them their supper, mother, and send them to bed," he told his wife. "They're late as it is. I'll take along Joe Mullins, and we'll find out what all this is about."

Tramping up the lane, he knocked at the door of a neighboring cottage, where he went into conference with a stout, phlegmatic individual.

"It may be all moonshine, Joe," he concluded, "imagination like. But the kids is pretty positive, and they've got their heads screwed on all right as a rule. I think we'd beter go along."

The other nodded.

They struck across the fields, Meighan moving with long, lithe strides, which made his shorter, stouter companion raise his voice in protest.

From the children's description they knew which craft to make for. It was indeed the only one along that part of the bank within a quarter of a mile, and thus early in the year few, if any, of the others were inhabited. The plank was still in position when they walked on board.

They made straight for the living quarters, examining them carefully by the light of a torch that Meighan had brought, and it did appear at first as if the children's story had been compounded of sheer imagination. Of a bound man there was no sign, and their irate father was actually contemplating the chastisement he would award them on his return, when he stopped short and pointed with his hand.

"Look at that, Joe," he said. "That's blood!"

On the spot where Fraser had lain there was an ugly smear, and Meighan voiced the thoughts of both of them when he spoke.

"What I'd like to know is where the chap's got to to whom that blood belongs."

"The kids were right, Joe," he went on. There's been dirty work here, and the chap they saw has been removed—and I bet you I know where."

He turned and dashed into the open and stood gazing keenly up and down the river. Upstream, in spite of the fact that darkness had now fallen, he noted a tiny blur, and at the instant that he did so the dull sound of a plunge travelled across the surface of the water.

James Meighan was a man of action. Also, providentially, he was a magnificent swimmer. Without hesitation, he dived fully clothed into the river and commenced to swim towards the blur.

The native in the dinghy heard him coming and with a curse began to scull away. Then, as if changing his mind, he stopped, rose to his feet, and, grasping a scull in threatening fashion, stood awaiting the head and flailing arms he could now make out threshing towards him.

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But if he could see Meighan, Meighan could also see him, and had no intention of being knocked on the head by the scull. Just out of its reach he dived, came up on the dinghy's farther side, grasped it, and tilted it sharply.

The man in the boat staggered, waved his arms wildly, the scull flying from his hands, and then completely lost his balance and fell overboard.

He did not stop to grapple with the other, but showing that he, too, could swim almost as well as Meighan, struck out for the bank, swarmed up it, and disappeared. Meighan did not attempt to follow him. He had other work to do.

A swift glance towards the bank apprised him of his whereabouts.

"Salter's Hole," he muttered. "I thought as much. Heaven knows whether I can get him out if he's there, but I've got to try."

Diving again, he swam strongly down towards the river's bed.

The latter, shelving abruptly at that point from comparatively shallow water to a depth of twenty feet, forms what is known as Salter's Hole, in which it is said that anyone drowned in the reaches above will almost invariably be found.

Meighan before his descent had inflated his lungs to their utmost capacity, and he was aware that he would be assisted in his search by the Hole's peculiar formation, which is funnel-shaped, so that everything sinking into it must come to rest within a very circumscribed area, and the latest object likely to be on top of any others.

As a matter of fact, he came upon Fraser almost at once, due solely to the shape of Salter's Hole; but fresh doubts assailed him when he realised the extent to which his body was weighted. The thought flashed through his mind that he would never get him to the surface.

That he did so was entirely owing to his magnificent strength and determination, although he found that to keep afloat with his burden was almost beyond his powers. It was with intense relief, therefore, that he found he had come up only a few yards away from the drifting dinghy. He reached this, hung on to the stern with one hand, supporter Fraser's insensible form with the other, and contrived by leg-movement to edge the little craft in towards the house-boat. His hail, as it bumped alongside, brought Joe Mullins to his assistance.

Between them they got Fraser on to the house-boat's deck.

"Well," Mullins observed, "if this bloke ain't a deader I don't know one when I see him!"

BUT Fraser wasn't dead. It took a quarter of an hour of strenuous first aid after they had released him to bring him round, but at the end of that time he was sitting up and giving his rescuers a brief account of what had brought him to such a pass. The good fellows were loud in their condemnation of what had happened.

"If I run across that black-faced scoundrel," Meighan declared, "I'll break his neck."

"Better hand him over to the police at once," Fraser smiled. "Now then, you chaps, I want to know how you so providentially came on the scene."

They told him, Meighan modestly glossing over the details of what he had done. Nevertheless he said enough to make Fraser clasp him warmly by the hand.

Fraser swung himself to his feet.

"I've got much to do," he said. "There's that native rascal to be traced and poor Dr. Ailing's body found. I must get to a telephone at once."

But, as it happened, he got to no telephone. All at once he reeled and fell back into Meighan's arms. The latter lowered him to the deck and looked at Mullins.

"Fetch a drop of water, Joe; the bloke's fainted again."

And when Fraser recovered, after only a few minutes this time, it was Meighan who took command.

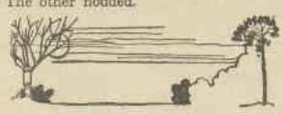
"You're not going to do anything, sir, until you've got some dry togs on, a square meal inside you, and have had a rest. You've had a nasty shake-up, you must remember."

Fraser knew that he was right. He had had a nasty shake-up, how nasty a one he was just beginning to realise. It would need a night's good rest at least to make him fit for much. Nevertheless, the thought of Ailing worried him. Then something Mullins said placed a different complexion on that.

"This doctor bloke you speak of, sir. What kind of fellow was he?"

"A small, dark-skinned little man—swarthy."

The other nodded.



"ABOUT half-past nine last night," he went on ponderously, "I came across a chap answering to that description talking to another chap alongside a car yonder up the lane. They shut up when I hove in sight, and the little bloke—as you've just described—got into the car and drove away."

"What kind of car was it?"

"An open four-seater."

"And the other man, can you describe him?"

"No, sir, I can't; I only spotted the little fellow when he got in front of the lights for a moment. All I should say was that he was tall and thin."

Fraser reflected.

"You didn't see another car there at the same time, I suppose?"

"No, sir, I didn't; there was only one as the chap drove off in."

"And what happened to the other man afterwards? Did you notice?"

"Well, sir, now I comes to think of it, he sloped off in the direction of the house-boat like."

It all fitted in, and Fraser gritted his teeth at the reflection of how trustfully he had driven Ailing to his own undoing. That ingenious raconteur would have a good deal to explain when next they met, for Fraser no longer thought pitifully of him as having met his end in the river.

At the same time the sense of his own weariness and unfitness swept over him again. After all it was not surprising.

He therefore accepted Meighan's offer of dry kit, and the three of them set off for the latter's cottage, at Fraser's suggestion going via the spot where Mullins had seen the car the night before. Needless to say, there was no car there now, and the inspector felt renewed certainty that it had been his own, for the place pointed out by Mullins exactly corresponded with that at which he and Ailing had left their vehicle.

This point virtually settled, the stout Mullins left them and went off at a tangent to his own abode, and in another five minutes Meighan's wife was attending to the nasty bruise and cut on Fraser's head.

"Lucky it did bleed," her husband observed as he watched the operation. "Otherwise Joe and I should never have guessed that anything was wrong."

"And I," said Fraser wryly, "should now be at the bottom of Salter's Hole."

Accommodation was limited in the Meighans' little house, but he allowed himself to be persuaded to go straight to bed instead of changing into dry clothes.

HE awoke in fact next morning feeling wonderfully refreshed, and after an early breakfast—for Meighan had to go to work—he commenced a thorough inspection of the house-boat. His clothes had been dried and his suit even pressed by the indefatigable Mrs. Meighan.

The craft, he learnt from his hosts, was owned by a Mr. Philip Thompson, a Londoner, they vaguely believed, though they were not certain on this point, and could tell him nothing else about him. He had possessed it since the previous summer, but had used it very little and was not expected on it again until the weather got really warm. Asked about his appearance they shook their heads. A number of people had come down to the craft at weekends, a rackety crew some of them, James Meighan stated, but which of the men among them had been the owner they had neither known nor cared.

Fraser's examination brought him no fresh information. The house-boat was cheaply and sparsely furnished and bore a general air of mildewed neglect, consistent with its not having been inhabited since the previous summer.

"I wonder," he murmured, "whether Mr. Philip Thompson was aware of the use to which it was put last night and the night before, or whether it was borrowed without his knowledge on account of its isolated situation? The identity of Mr. Philip Thompson, when revealed, may shed some light upon that problem."

For the rest, he found no papers or anything bearing on what had happened, and reached the conclusion that he would accomplish nothing useful by continuing his search.

He said good-bye to Mrs. Meighan and Jimmy and Joan, and walked across the fields to the nearest station, where he could catch a London train. He was in town for some time, and then in another police car resumed his interrupted journey to Brinley Parva, a small piece of sticking plaster on his head the only visible result of the ordeal he had gone through.

He drove straight through Franchester to the smaller place, where he inquired at the Crown and Anchor if there were any letters for him, for that was still his postal address. There were, among them a thick official envelope, which he seized on eagerly and opened before anything else.

He read the contents carefully, and his face evinced his satisfaction.

"Good," he murmured, "the very thing I wanted to know."

Placing it carefully in his inside pocket, he then inquired for Sydney Kerle, to learn from a somewhat perturbed landlord that the lame man had not been seen since the previous afternoon.

"He went out on his motor bike and hasn't come back yet," he explained. "I trust he hasn't met with an accident. We naturally expected him to sleep here last night."

"I shouldn't worry," Fraser soothed him. "Mr. Kerle is a law unto himself, and if a sudden whim assailed him to ride off to John o' Groats he would probably do it then and there. Even I," he added, with a grim humor that was necessarily wasted on the landlord, "sometimes find myself compelled to be absent for a night or two

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without being able to give warning in advance."

"Yes, sir," said the landlord, "quite so, which reminds me, sir, Major Tate has rung you up more than once. I feel sure he would like to see you as soon as possible."

"Then," Fraser replied, "his wish will be fulfilled. I'm going back to Franchester straight away."

The Chief Constable was in police headquarters at Franchester when the Scotland Yard man arrived. His usual cheery aspect and genial greeting were conspicuous by their absence. His tone was curt.

"So you've turned up at last, Inspector, have you? I want a word with you."

IT struck Fraser with some amusement that Major Tate's demeanor was reminiscent of what it must have been in past days, when ordering an errant subaltern to appear before him.

"I've received a report, Inspector, from Superintendent Cross containing some strong criticism of your activities, which I'm bound to say I do not consider unjustified unless you have a satisfactory explanation to make."

"With regard to Mr. Sinclair, I take it, sir?"

"Primarily—yes."

"Then, sir, before we discuss matters further I should be glad if you would kindly read carefully through these papers," and he handed Tate the registered envelope he had had that morning.

The Chief Constable took it, and did as he was requested. When he looked up his expression had altered. So had the timbre of his voice.

"This," he admitted, "certainly tends to a point of view which I confess had not occurred to me, nor, I feel sure, to Superintendent Cross. Acting on this information, what procedure do you propose to adopt?"

"I should like a search-warrant, sir, to go over Sinclair's premises in company with Sergeant Barnes."

Tate drummed his fingers on the table.

"Yes, that will be necessary, but I suggest it should be done quietly after business hours to-night. No need to set the public talking, is there? After all, we're not yet certain . . ."

"On the contrary, sir, I think the sooner it's done the better, now that to some extent I've shown my hand.

"Very well, perhaps you're right. I'll see what the superintendent thinks about this fresh development."

Cross was called in and allowed to read the contents of Fraser's registered packet. They had much the same effect upon him as upon the Chief Constable.

"Of course, sir," he said slowly, "if we'd known this before we might have acted differently. I see now what the inspector was driving at when he had that letter sent to our friend across the way."

"A course which still strikes me as a bit unconventional," Tate remarked dryly, "although it may yet be justified by results."

Privately, Fraser considered the justification already ample, but he was too tactful to point this out.

"So," he remarked, "I may have my warrant, sir?"

"You may; I'll put the preliminaries through at once. You agree, don't you, Cross?"

"I do, sir."

He was regarding the Scotland Yard man with more approval than he had ever hitherto shown, and seemed about to speak when the Chief Constable turned again to Fraser.

"By the by," he asked, "where have you been the last two days?"

Whereupon Fraser recounted his adventures, which, as well they might, left his hearers amazed.

"You've been a very lucky man," Tate said gravely. "Some public recognition of his bravery must be awarded to Meighan. He deserves it if anybody ever did. But this about Dr. Alling is astounding. Has he been seen about the town since, Cross, do you know?"

"I can't say, sir, but I'll very soon find out. If so, it'll be interesting to hear his explanation of what happened on the river. All the same, it introduces still further complications, and hardly tallies with this," and he rested his fingers on the papers he had just read.

"No, that it doesn't!" Tate exclaimed. "By Jove, this case is a nightmare if ever there was one."

"Possibly we shall discover some connecting threads when we search Sinclair's premises," Fraser remarked, and the Chief Constable nodded.

"Let's hope so," Cross agreed. He breathed heavily, like a man who has screwed himself up to a great decision.

"I congratulate you, Inspector, on your providential escape. And if going through Sinclair's effects brings anything to light, I'll be the first to give you credit. I can't say fairer than that."

He held out his hand, and Fraser shook it warmly. The first unpleasantness he had ever had with a provincial superintendent was healed.

Tate remarked the action, and gave it his approval.

"Good," he observed. "I didn't like to think of you two fellows at cross-purposes."

FRASER and Barnes obtained their search-warrant and strolled over to Sinclair's pharmacy, where at the very outset they met with an unexpected check. A young assistant was behind the counter, who shook his head when Fraser inquired for Mr. Sinclair.

"I'm afraid you won't be able to see him. He's away for the day."

"Away for the day?" Fraser repeated. "Where's he gone?"

"Ask me another," was the flippant reply; the speaker evidently had no inkling of their identity. "He does go off occasionally, leaving me in charge—you see I'm qualified."

"When did he decide to go?"

"Last night or this morning, I suppose. He didn't say anything about it to me yesterday—forgot it, perhaps; I'd got leave to go off early. I found a note left out for me when I opened up the shop a couple of hours ago. Who shall I tell him called? A couple of travellers, aren't you?"

"No," Fraser told him grimly—there were no customers in the shop—"we're a couple of police. You can keep this under your hat, young man, but we hold a warrant to search the flat upstairs."

The assistant shot round the counter and planted himself before them. His face was pale, but determined.

"Oh no, you don't!" he exclaimed. "Police be blowed! You're a pair of crooks, that's what you are, and you're not going into that flat if I know it. Get out of this shop, or I'll call the police."

Fraser smiled and motioned to Barnes, who went to the door and beckoned to a constable in the square outside.

"Just tell this young man who we are," the inspector said when the uniformed man arrived; "he'll believe you more readily than our credentials."

A minute later an embarrassed youth was stammering out apologies, but Fraser checked him in kindly fashion.

With a nod to the assistant, and followed by Sergeant Barnes, he walked through into the dispensary, from which a flight of stairs ascended to the flat above.

While he was about it, Fraser and Barnes conducted an exhaustive search upstairs. The flat consisted of four rooms and a bathroom—sitting-room, two bedrooms, and a small room which might once have been a dressing-room, but had been converted into a kitchen presided over by the chemist's daily maid, who, the two detectives had elicited from the assistant, had been given a day off.

The sitting-room produced nothing of significance, but in what was obviously Sinclair's bedroom, Fraser, turning out one of the drawers, came across an old pair of flannel trousers with a small tear in one leg. From his pocket-case he produced the tiny piece of material he had gathered from the rain-pipe outside Colonel Warman's room, and gave a grunt of satisfaction.

"Looks near enough to me," he muttered, "but we'll submit both of them to a practical tailor, and see what he has to say."

Cheered by this discovery, they continued their search even more thoroughly than before. Nothing else, however, rewarded their efforts, and reluctantly they passed on to the spare room.

This, neat and tidy, did not appear to have been occupied for a long while, and Barnes regarded it with a rather doleful expression.

"I doubt if we find much here," he stated.

The room certainly bore out his pessimism. Every drawer in it was empty, and so was the wardrobe—ready for Sinclair's next visitor whenever he or she might arrive.

But in the end Fraser's thoroughness had its reward. His last act before they left was to stand on a chair and examine the top of the wardrobe. When he descended he had something in his hand.

Barnes whistled.

"A woman's handbag!" he ejaculated.

"Decorated with two initials in silver," Fraser pointed out, "P.C."

The two men looked at each other.

"Patience Cartwright?" the sergeant hazarded.

"It might be. On the other hand, a lady visitor may have left it behind her, and the initials may be a coincidence. A pity Amelia isn't alive to tell us if it was her sister's or not, but we may find someone to identify it. Come to think of it, I don't remember any mention of a handbag being picked up near Patience's body, and women nearly always carry them these days. Let's see if there's anything inside."

There wasn't; the bag was completely empty.

"Never mind," Fraser said cheerfully, "a murderer's been hanged many times on less than this."

They carried the bag and the trousers with them when they left the flat.

For reasons of his own Fraser returned to the Crown and Anchor with Barnes, and asked for Sydney Kerle, only to learn to his annoyance that like Sinclair he was still missing.

After this, he rang up Cross and inquired

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after Dr. Ailing. That gentleman had not been seen in the town for the past 36 hours.

As he jogged along at a discreet distance behind Sinclair's car, Kerle could not help contemplating the night's happenings. That both Dr. Ailing and the native were up to no good seemed pretty clear, as in his opinion was the fact that something untoward had occurred to Fraser. That Ailing knew something about this he was certain, and the question was whether only one or both of them were concerned in it.

Sinclair soon turned off the road into a network of lanes in which but for the glare of the car's lamps Kerle might easily have lost him, pulling up before long outside a small house which seemed the only one in the vicinity.

Kerle immediately shot into another convenient lane, where, leaving his machine parked right against the hedge, he doubled back to the larger lane and peered cautiously round the corner.

Sinclair seemed to be struggling to unfasten a suitcase from a luggage grid at the rear of his car. He got it free at last, and carrying it in his hand, pushed open a small gate leading into a garden in front of the house. Kerle immediately tiptoed down the road until he was opposite the gate.

The house was in darkness, and he could see no sign of the man he had been following.

"Must have let himself in with a latch-key," he murmured, and continued his progress on tiptoe through the garden gate.

Next instant he was startled and blinded by a powerful light flashed straight into his eyes.

"Dear me, it's Mr. Kerle, of Brimley Parva," observed a mild and sing-song voice. "What a curious coincidence that we should run into one another here."

"Seldom in his life had Kerle felt more foolish. Sinclair, he guessed, must have been aware of his presence all along, and have deliberately waited for him, in more senses than one, to go up the garden path. He strove to keep his wits.

"I think I know your voice," he said, "but with that light in my eyes I can't see who you are."

The light went off, and Kerle waited until his eyesight might be judged to have adjusted itself. Then, with what he hoped was the right note of surprise, he exclaimed:

"Why, it's Mr. Sinclair, the chemist, isn't it?"

"Correct," was the dry response. "To what do I owe the honor of this call?"

Kerle uttered a deliberately fatuous giggle.

"Well, the fact is," he explained, "I've been pottering round these lanes on the old bike—I often do of an evening, you know—until I've got thoroughly lost. I was just wondering what to do when your car came along, and I saw someone get out of it and turn into this garden. It struck me that whoever it was might put me back on the road to Brimley Parva."

"Dear me," remarked the chemist, "how simple a coincidence is when it's explained, Mr. Kerle. Of course, I'll willingly direct you, but won't you come in first and have a bite of supper and a drink?"

It sounded a quite ordinary and yet a surprising invitation. Would Sinclair have proffered it, Kerle wondered, unless his conscience had been clear? On the other hand, it might be a bait to lure him into the building to meet fresh unpleasantness. If so, it was a tempting one, for it made Kerle recall that he had had no food since tea-time, and become conscious of a distinct vacuum inside him.

"Thanks," he answered, "that's very kind of you. I will."

The house, as he found when he entered it, was smaller than he had thought it to be, a mere cottage, in fact.

"I've had it some time," Sinclair explained. "It's a relief to get away from the atmosphere of even a small town like Franchester into the real country occasionally, and the rent is low owing to its isolated position. The river, moreover, is only half a mile away, and I have a canoe in which I go exploring. Now, a match to the fire and we'll soon be really comfortable. Oil lamps, of course, but that's about the only disadvantage."

Ushering Kerle into a tiny sitting-room, he lit a lamp and then applied a second match to the paper, sticks, and coal already laid in the grate.

What could be more normal? Kerle mused. It was just the courteous host setting his guest at ease.

"You've a methodical mind, I observe, Mr. Sinclair," he said aloud.

"I always leave things ready for my next visit when I go," the other replied. "Makes all the difference to one's comfort when one arrives. Don't you agree?"

Kerle did, emphatically. He eyed with interest the luncheon-basket his host had brought in with him from the car, and which he had at first taken for a suit-case. When a cold chicken, some appetising-looking rolls, and a tin of potato salad emerged from it, he began to feel glad he had accepted Sinclair's invitation, a feeling that was accentuated when from a cupboard the chemist produced two bottles of beer.

"By Jove," he laughed, "we're going to do ourselves well."

A curious expression glinted for a moment in the other's dark eyes, and then was gone.

"You like beer, Mr. Kerle?" he inquired politely.

Kerle laughed. "You ask my friend, Inspector Fraser, and see what he says," he answered, and in his turn directed a momentary keen glance at Sinclair's face. He had introduced the Fraser motif deliberately, but had to confess that the result was small.

"Ah, Inspector Fraser," was the indifferent reply, "a gentleman I know little about, although he has consulted me once or twice in the course of his inquiries. Nevertheless, he is not altogether apart from something I shall have presently to say. But let us have supper first. I expect you find, as I do, that the keen night air gives one an appetite. My car may be old, but because one can get the air in it and not merely draughts, I prefer it to the modern boxed-in saloon."

"And I," said Kerle, with enthusiasm, "wouldn't exchange my old bike for the finest car on the road."

During the meal they spoke on indifferent subjects—Franchester and its people, the cottage, the advantages of the river over the open road, the respective disadvantages of journalism and pharmacy in these days of competition. By what seemed a mutual tacit agreement, no mention was made of the subject which was at any rate uppermost in Kerle's mind.

Silence at length fell between them. Sinclair sat with brooding eyes, his fingers playing with the glass from which he, too, had sparingly drunk. Kerle, watching him, bent forward, his voice insinuating and soft.

"You intimated a short while back that you had something to tell me in which Inspector Fraser was involved."

Sinclair started. His eyes hardened. His sing-song tones grew harsh. He, too, leaned forward in his chair.

"I did. I was just debating it in my mind when you spoke. It was because I thought I ought to tell you that I asked you in, Mr. Kerle. I know who murdered the Cartwright woman and Colonel Warman."

"The devil you do!"

A thrill went through Sydney Kerle, though he strove not to show it in his speech or bearing. It seemed to him that his stupendous luck was going to serve him well again—that once more he was going to fathom the secret of a crime before the official police.

"Who was it?"

Leaning back in his chair, his eyes fixed on his companion's face, the chemist seemed to read his thoughts. For an instant his lips twitched. Then his countenance regained its immobility.

"Who," he countered, "do you think?"

But Kerle had no intention of putting his reputation for sagacity to the hazard of a guess. He was too impatient to learn the truth, moreover, to waste time in profitless speculation. He made an irritable gesture with his hand.

"Who was it?" he asked again.

The chemist beat about the bush no longer.

"Dr. Ailing," he said with studied calm.

"Dr. Ailing!" Kerle repeated the name with an odd feeling of surprise. It was not the one he would have put forward first.

"You are certain?" he asked doubtfully, "I shouldn't have thought . . ."

The chemist bent forward again.

"I saw him kill Patience Cartwright myself."

THIS was positive assertion with a vengeance. For a moment its full implication failed to strike Kerle.

"Then why," he demanded at last, "didn't you stop him or go——"

"To the police?"

"Precisely, to the police."

The chemist's lips twitched again. "Because," he admitted, "I, too, have sinned. But listen, I will tell you everything from the beginning. It will ease my conscience and perhaps gain me your advice.

"Like you, Mr. Kerle, I am in the habit of roaming abroad at night, sometimes on my cycle, sometimes on foot. I am a martyr to insomnia, and these nocturnal excursions help. On the night of Patience Cartwright's death, I had cycled over to Brimley Parva, left my cycle in the hedgerow and strolled across the fields. I was close to a stile when I saw a woman approaching on the farther side. Just as she reached it, a man sprang upon her and bore her to the ground.

"I rushed forward, scrambled over the stile, and as I dragged him off her I turned the flashlight I always carry upon them both. It showed me that I was too late, the woman was already dead, killed by a noose about her neck. It also showed me that the victim was Patience Cartwright, and her assailant Dr. Ailing.

"I was stupefied. My first impulse was to avenge the poor woman at my feet, my second, as you suggested, to summon the police. Then something—the devil perhaps—thrust a thought into my mind. I, the sole witness, held the doctor in my power.

"I am a poor man, Mr. Kerle; my business doesn't prosper as people think it does. I saw a way now of getting the money that I needed.

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"Yes, blackmail; an ugly word, but we needn't burke it. I told Ailing I would hold my tongue—if he made it worth my while to hold it.

"He has done so ever since, and I can't say my conscience unduly troubled me—after all, Patience Cartwright could not be brought back to life, and Ailing alive and helping me seemed more sensible than Ailing hanged—until I made the discovery that he had murdered Warman as well. He boasted of it, as a matter of fact—the fellow's a homicidal maniac.

"I realised then what kind of man my ill-judged action had kept at large. Who, I keep asking myself, will be the next? For another victim there will be unless he can be curbed. But I have placed myself in a terrible position—one realises this kind of thing too late—that of accessory after the fact, accessory to murder. I came down here to think things out as calmly as I could, and your unexpected arrival seemed almost providential, if that's the word I want. I decided almost immediately, knowing your reputation in criminal matters, to get everything off my chest and ask your advice. Now, what in heaven's name shall I do?"

Kerle, who had studiously refrained from interruption throughout this extraordinary narrative, regarded his companion with a distaste and contempt he did little to conceal.

"The only thing you can do," he began coldly, "is to go straight to the police and——"

He stopped short. Footsteps sounded on the garden path. There came a peremptory knock at the front door.

Sinclair's lips tightened. He made no effort to answer the summons.

"Whoever it is," he said evenly, "will discover that the door is on the latch."

So it seemed. There came another knock, and then the footsteps sounded in the hall. The sitting-room door was thrown open, and a man strode in.

It was Dr. Ailing.

His advent astonished Kerle, who, truth to tell, had thought it might be the police. He was evidently in a fiendish temper, though his glare at Kerle evinced as much surprise and discomfiture as rage.

"What's this man doing here?" he demanded, swinging round on the chemist, who had remained passively in his chair. "Not been talking, have you?" he added with a sneer.

Sinclair nodded.

"Yes, doctor," he said quietly. "I've been talking."

Ailing stared.

"What about? Surely not . . ."

The chemist rose to his feet, his hands in his jacket pockets.

"Yes," he went on evenly, "about—everything."

"You mean that you——"

"I mean that I've told Mr. Kerle how I caught you killing Patience Cartwright and how you confessed to me that you murdered Colonel Warman as well. Kerle, not unnaturally, seemed somewhat shocked. He was just advising me to take my story to the police when you arrived. What are you here for, by the way? To make a third confession?"

Ailing stood thunderstruck. Then his face grew convulsed, his fists clenched, and he flung himself at Sinclair.

"You liar!" he yelled. "You infernal liar!"

It was all over in a moment, before Kerle could intervene. With a lithe, tigerish movement the chemist, avoiding Ailing's onslaught. His hands came from his pockets, something was thrown round the doctor's neck and jerked tight. There came a sound like the snapping of a twig, and Ailing's head lolled grotesquely as the other flung him to the floor.

Above his dead body the killer's eyes glared into Kerle's and into the lame man's brain at that instant crashed the truth. The story he had just listened to was all moonshine, concocted to mislead him. The murderer of Patience Cartwright and Warman was the man who had just added a third savage crime to his list.

Did Fraser know this? Kerle believed now that he did.

With another lithe movement Sinclair untwisted the cord with which he had dislocated the doctor's neck and advanced on Kerle, who was regretting afresh the absence of the automatic which would have enabled him to dominate affairs. Well, he would have to do without it. He had still a trick or two in his own locker, and he would sell his life as dearly as he could. All the same, at his heart he was conscious of the cold grip of fear.

Like two dogs seeking for an opening, they circled round each other, Kerle's grey eyes behind their glasses never leaving those of his antagonist. When Sinclair leaped his fist would shoot out, straight, he prayed, to the point of the other's chin. Just one well-directed blow, and he might turn the tables yet.

SINCLAIR feinted to come in, checked himself, and grinned in evil fashion when Kerle's fist smote the empty air. His speed of movement was incredible, making Kerle doubly aware of the handicap of his game leg. Setting his teeth, the lame man resumed his watchful poise. The end was not yet.

But, for the time being, it was, though not in any manner foreseen by Kerle. Further footsteps sounded on the path outside the house, quick, light ones this time. There came the rat-tat of the knocker, the tinkle of an old-fashioned bell.

A queer light came into Sinclair's face.

"Our argument, Mr. Kerle," he murmured, "must be postponed."

He thrust the noose he carried back into his pocket, and, like a stone from a sling, propelled himself from the room. Standing with clenched hands, Kerle heard the low murmur of voices outside. Who would come in this time, he asked himself, friend or foe? If it was a possible ally he meant to enlist his aid at once. Sinclair without delay must be got under control.

The voices grew nearer and a puzzled frown made its appearance on Kerle's brow. It changed to an expression of utter consternation when in sardonic fashion the chemist ushered a tall, fair girl into the room. Greeting the lame man in relieved and hearty fashion, she advanced towards him with outstretched hand.

"Everything seemed so mysterious," she said, "that I began to be afraid, but I know it's all right since you're here, Mr. Kerle. Where's Geoffrey? I hoped to see him, too."

Kerle took her hand mechanically, but for the life of him he could not speak. Mary Fraser—Fraser's wife—what malign fate brought her here at such a moment? Then, catching sight of Sinclair's face, he understood. Something devilish was afoot.

From Mary Fraser, still standing with her hand in Kerle's and puzzled by his lack of response, came the sound of an indrawn breath. She had just caught sight of Ailing's prostrate body on the floor.

Her eyes looked into Kerle's warning ones, and she grew very pale.

NOT for the first time, Sydney Kerle found himself admiring the pluck of the girl Fraser had married. She was aware of a man lying dead on the floor, she knew that something was very wrong, she was pale, but her voice when she spoke was steady.

"What, Mr. Kerle, does all this mean?"

It was Sinclair who answered her, coming forward and bowing in an exaggerated fashion for which Kerle could have kicked him.

"It means, Mrs. Fraser, a little ruse on my part, I fear. I understand that in your husband's two previous big cases you took no mean part. But in this one you have, so far, taken no part at all. That, I told myself, should be remedied. Let us have romance and beauty instilled into the drab affair.

"So, before leaving home to-night, I took the liberty of telephoning you in the name of Superintendent *Cross* to tell you that your husband had brought his case to a triumphant conclusion and wished to celebrate the fact with you here. I am delighted to find that you took me at my word—there was always the chance that you might smell a rat and not turn up, which I should have regretted for more reasons than one. Apart from the pleasure I shall have in making your acquaintance—you are, if I may say so, a very pretty woman, Mrs. Fraser—there is another aspect to consider. Your husband, I am forced to believe, entertains suspicions of me concerning certain events that have been happening lately. Should he be so misguided as to take action against me, you will be useful as—a hostage."

"You scoundrel," Kerle breathed.

The chemist turned on him, his face malignant.

"You fool," he gibed; "you think yourself mightily clever, I know, but I've tricked you just as I tricked her. I could have killed you outside on the garden path, but I wanted to make sure that you were acting alone, and not as an advance guard for someone else. Now that I'm sure it was only your cursed curiosity which brought you, I know how to act."

His hand in his pocket, he stepped quickly forward. Kerle expected to see that deadly noose appear again, but this time it was a pistol that was presented at his head, a pistol of peculiar construction. It checked Kerle's own forward movement towards the other, and Sinclair grinned.

"I should have used it before," he said, "but I wanted you to feel the cord about your neck. Well, that can come later."

While he was talking Kerle rushed—he saw it was his only chance—but his last desperate effort proved of no avail. The chemist's finger tightened on the trigger, and for an instant Kerle was conscious of receiving full in the face what seemed to be a gust of asphyxiating air. He reeled clutched vainly at the weapon in the other's outstretched hand, and then fell heavily to the ground. He heard, as if from a great distance, Mary Fraser's frightened cry, groaned mentally at the thought of leaving her in this scoundrel's power, and then oblivion overwhelmed him, and he knew no more.

With a smirk of triumph the chemist turned towards the girl.

"A little invention of my own," he began, with smug and evil satisfaction, only to stop short with dropped jaw.

He in his turn found himself gazing into the muzzle of a pistol.

Sick and shaken, Kerle came round again to find himself lying where he had fallen,

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Sinclair and Mary Fraser were still present, but there was more than one difference in the scene which at first his clouded sensibilities did not take in.

Opening his eyes and finding the light hurt them abominably, he shut them once more, only to open them again later and discover a change in the quality of the light. Formerly, he remembered, it had been lamplight. Now it was daylight, with the sun shining through the window.

This discovery did much to restore his faculties, and he turned his attention to the others, whose immobility also vaguely struck him as curious. They were seated on opposite sides of the table, and both looked tired and drawn. In Mary's hand, which rested on the table, was a pistol. Sinclair's weapon, whose gas-filled contents he had discharged at Kerle, now lay upon the floor.

The girl's voice broke the silence.

"Are you better, Mr. Kerle?"

He strove to pull himself together.

"Yes," he said uncertainly, "I think so, but I don't understand. It was night—a little while ago; now it's day."

"You have," she told him, "been unconscious for many hours. During that time I have been able to keep this man from doing any further harm. As soon as you feel you can, I want you to try to fetch my husband. You will find my car outside."

"I'll go on my bike," Kerle said promptly, and then renewed nausea overtook him, and he reclosed his eyes. Many hours! She had broken the news a little abruptly. It required some taking in.

Her strained, pale face urged him to make an effort, and he struggled to his feet. Nevertheless, it was another half-hour before he felt competent to undertake the journey.

"Sure you'll be all right?" he asked her.

She nodded.

"Yes, but be as quick as you can."

A sudden idea occurred to him. He wondered why he hadn't thought of it before, but the fumes of the gas still seemed to befog his brain. Going up to Sinclair, still sullen and motionless under the menace of the girl's automatic, he dragged from his pocket the cord with which he had strangled Ailing—whose rigid body helped to persuade him that everything was not a horrid dream.

"Turn round and put your hands behind you," he commanded.

With a weary shrug of his shoulders, the chemist did as he was bid, and Kerle tied his hands securely together at the wrists.

"That settles you, my lad. He won't be a menace to you now, Mrs. Fraser. I promise you I won't be long."

She smiled wanly.

"I hope you won't; it's been a bit of a strain."

With a final glance at the gloomily resigned chemist, Kerle went out.

Sinclair's old two-seater and Mary Fraser's small saloon still stood untouched in the road outside, as did Kerle's motor-cycle in the lane. Evidently no country policemen had made a patrol round that district during the night; he would almost certainly have made inquiries at the cottage regarding the "motor show" outside. Kerle found himself speculating on what would have happened if he had.

Getting astride his cycle, he kick-started the engine into strident life and shot off at a rate that in other circumstances would have been highly reprehensible. And reprehensible a patrolling police car did consider it when he swooped out into the main road across their bows. Dimly Kerle heard the sound of a gong, but he was stopping neither for man nor devil until he reached Rose Cottage. He could imagine the ribald incredulity of the occupants of the car when he made his excuses for his reckless driving. Lowering his head, therefore, and opening the throttle, he continued at accelerated speed.

For which reason he got to Rose Cottage with two outpaced and furious policemen on his heels. One of them scrambled out of the car and shouted angrily as Kerle charged up the garden path.

"You infernal idiot . . . driving to the danger of . . . failing to stop . . ."

The sentences fell fruitlessly on the lame man's ears as he hammered at the door.

"Fraser!" he called. "Fraser, where are you?"

There was no reply; it was obvious the cottage was empty. Muttering a malediction, Kerle turned away, to run straight into the arms of his pursuers.

"No doubt whatever about that bag being Patience Cartwright's"

"So now we know," Fraser remarked, as he and Sergeant Barnes walked in the direction of the Crown and Anchor.

He had shown the bag they had discovered in Sinclair's room to the "daily help," who had worked for the two Misses Cartwright, and she had identified it as Patience's at once. A tailor had also given it as his firm opinion that the piece of material Fraser had found on the rain-pipe had come from the torn pair of trousers.

"Good enough, sir, isn't it?" Barnes inquired. "I take it you'll——"

"Apply for a warrant for Sinclair's arrest? Yes. I think the evidence justifies that. Hullo, what's all that fuss over at Rose Cottage? I'm blessed if it isn't Sidney Kerle!"

They hastened their steps to where Kerle, a policeman on each side of him, was talking and gesticulating furiously.

"What's the matter?" Fraser demanded. "Good morning, Kerle. I've been wondering where you'd got to."

"Matter enough," the senior policeman growled, "driving like a madman this gentleman was. We're just asking him to explain——"

"Explain, be hanged!" Kerle exploded. "Thank goodness you've turned up, Fraser. Listen, I've something to tell you, man."

In a few swift sentences he apprised him of the state of affairs and Fraser's expression changed.

"Mary!" he exclaimed incredulously. "Mary in Sinclair's cottage? Why on earth did you leave her there? Why didn't you send her for help?"

"Because," he explained, "she wouldn't have come if I had. Anyway, why not allow her the credit of her capture? She's all right, sitting there as cool as you please with her little pistol. And I've tied up Sinclair's hands; he can't do her any harm.

But Fraser's face was lined with anxiety. He was always very quick to sense when his wife might be in danger. Wasting no time, he explained his identity and the situation to the motor police, and enlisted their help.

Kerle meanwhile had departed at top speed to the Crown and Anchor. When he came back he patted his pocket significantly.

"A bit late in the day, but I've got Belinda Jane. If I'd had her last night, Sinclair would have been in jail by now and the wretched Ailing alive."

The two policemen stared, but Fraser knew the lame man's pet name for his trusty automatic. Seeing him armed he did not trouble to get his own.

At this moment Chubb, the Brimley Parva constable, hove in sight, and Kerle greeted him with acclamation.

"The more the merrier!" he cried. "Chubb, old man, jump up behind!"

Nothing loth, although he had no idea what it was all about, Chubb adjusted himself on Kerle's powerful machine, and its owner let in the clutch and dashed away, leaving Fraser and Barnes to follow him in the police car, the driver of which shook his head in rueful resignation.

With Kerle's departure, Mary began to feel the strain of her long night vigil. On receiving the telephone message purporting to be from Superintendent Cross, although she had no reason not to think it genuine, she had slipped a small automatic that Geoffrey had given her in her bag, perhaps because the memory of what had happened to her in his two former cases would never entirely leave her. She had produced this after Sinclair had laid out Kerle with the gas weapon, and since the latter only fired one charge had had him at her mercy.

Making him drop the gas-gun on the floor and sit at the table with his hands upon it, she had waited grimly through the long hours for the lame man's recovery, which Sinclair assured her—and something made her believe he spoke the truth—would eventually materialise. It had done so, but not before the strain, with Ailing's dead body on the floor, had grown almost intolerable.

With Kerle's revival, she had been able to relax and send him almost light-heartedly in quest of Geoffrey. But as soon as she heard the diminishing beat of his engine in the distance reaction set in, and she felt most horribly tired and terribly alone. The thought struck her that she should have gone herself, but she had been loth, as Kerle had surmised, not to stick it out to the triumphant end. Kerle, moreover, would know better where to look for her husband.

All the same when a wave of faintness assailed her, passing though it was, it was followed by a feeling of panic. The pistol had nearly dropped from her weary hand, she had seen a glitter of understanding in Sinclair's watching eyes, and knew that he was straining at his bonds. She must not let him get on top at this last moment. She must not!

With a renewed effort she pulled herself together and her prisoner ceased to try to free himself. He, too, was weary, and the fact was reflected in his mien as he turned his head and glanced towards the window. It seemed to denote that he was throwing up the sponge.

It was almost imperceptible, but she felt certain she saw him start, and that for an instant his whole fabric tautened. She, too, looked window-wards, the blinds having been raised by Kerle before leaving, but could see nothing. Sinclair, when her attention was directed to him again, was once more sagging in his chair.

But his eyes were curious. The weariness had departed from them; they were alert, watchful.

As if aware that they were giving away too much, he presently closed them, leaned back as if sleep was overpowering him. Mary, vaguely suspicious, feeling that he had something up his sleeve, forced all her faculties into action to keep him under observation.

Which, no doubt, was why she failed to hear the faint sound of a window being

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opened at the back of the house, the almost inaudible padding of feet upon the floor, the noiseless pushing ajar of the sitting-room door behind her.

Like thistledown a noose fluttered over her head and just touched her shoulders. It was jerked tight as Sinclair sprang from his seat, the light of fiendish triumph blazing in his eyes.

Sydney Kerle, all out, roared down the road while Chubb clung to him for dear life and wondered dismally why he had ever been inveigled into such a perilous position.

P.C. Chubb heaved a sigh of relief when he felt the cycle slowing to a stop. Slipping off the carrier, he mopped the sweat of apprehension that had gathered on his brow, and while Kerle was jerking the machine back on its stand moved forward a few steps and gazed curiously up the garden path.

Almost immediately he slid back under cover of the hedge and grasped Kerle's arm.

"There's a man sneaking round to the back of the house," he said, "a black man."

Kerle stared.

"The devil there is!" he exclaimed. "Did he spot you?"

The constable shook his head.

"No, I'm sure he didn't. He wasn't looking our way at all."

Kerle regarded his motor-cycle with affection.

"She's a quiet old lady," he said, "even if she's fast. Well, Chubb, what do you advise our doing now?"

"Cut round to the back after him and nab him," Chubb replied.

But Kerle demurred.

"No, I think we'll take a look through the sitting-room window first of all and see if everything's O.K. there."

Chubb signified his agreement, and they passed through the garden gate, walking on the grass so that their footsteps were inaudible. Together they peered through the window, and what they saw blanched the faces of them both.

Next instant Kerle's automatic was in his hand. Scarcely appearing to aim, he fired through the glass, and then clutched at Chubb's sleeve.

"This way," he cried, and ran for the front door, which although closed was on the latch as he had left it.

Bursting into the sitting-room, Kerle drove back Sinclair, who was advancing towards them, at the pistol point. Then he turned to Chubb, who was already bending over Mary. The policeman's usually rubicund face was haggard.

"We were too late, sir," he said brokenly. "She's gone!"

IT was not often that a sense of utter failure depressed Sydney Kerle's somewhat self-satisfied disposition, but he was conscious of it now. He heard the sound of a motor horn outside in the road, and knew that in a moment or two Geoffrey Fraser would be in the room and would hold him responsible for what had occurred. No one but he could know how bitter were his self-reproaches for leaving Mary alone.

Thrusting his pistol into Chubb's hand, he indicated the chemist.

"Keep your eye on him," he adjured, and then went down on his knees beside the girl, from whose throat the constable had already removed the strangler's cord.

Next instant he looked up, his eyes alight.

"She's alive, you silly boob," he shouted. "Alive, I tell you."

At which propitious instant, Fraser, his face tense with anxiety, strode into the room.

Never, Fraser thought, had he seen such a shambles. Dr. Alling still lay where he had lain for so many hours, and close to him sprawled the Indian, a small round hole in his forehead testifying to the accuracy of Kerle's aim. Then there was Mary, whose aspect would have driven everything else out of his mind had he not been just in time to hear Kerle's reassuring words.

Catching his eye, the lame man reaffirmed them.

"She'll be all right," he said. "She's coming round already."

At his juncture a queer flat voice broke in from which all hope and animation had departed. It came from Sinclair, the chemist, slumped in his chair, his hands still pinioned behind him.

"You'll find some brandy in that cupboard."

One of the mobile policemen produced the bottle and handed it to Fraser, now stooping over Mary. But Kerle's and Fraser's glance had met again. The same thought was in both their minds. Sinclair, reading it, smiled wanly.

"It isn't poisoned, if that's what you think," he said. "I could do with a drop myself."

But Fraser ordered it to be put back in the cupboard, and the key, which was in the lock, turned upon it and handed to him.

"I THINK," was his grim comment, "we'll take no chances."

Whereat Sinclair shrugged his shoulders and said no more.

At this point Chubb, who had been wriggling uncomfortably in apparent indecision, produced from his tunic a small flask.

"I didn't ought rightly to be carrying it," he mumbled, "but maybe 'twill do the young lady good. 'Tis whisky though, not brandy."

Kerle took it from him, and placed it to Mary's lips. The effect, to Fraser's profound relief, was almost instantaneous. She opened her eyes and at once recognised her husband.

For a few moments he soothed her and held her to him. Then, satisfied that there was no further cause for anxiety on her behalf, he strode across the room and confronted the chemist.

"Baqa Ali," he said sternly, "alias Thomas Sinclair, I arrest you for the murder of Doctor Frederick Alling, and I warn you. . . . Further charges may be preferred against you later."

The arrested man glanced up in apathetic fashion.

"O.K. by me," he remarked, the film-like phrase sounding queer in conjunction with his swarthy skin and accent, now much more marked than usual under the stress of his suppressed emotion.

Sergeant Barnes eyed his bound-up wrists which appeared to earn his professional disapproval.

"Better handcuff him properly, hadn't we, sir?" he suggested. "That cord, by the way, forms part of the evidence."

Fraser agreed, and so did the prisoner.

"I'm tired of this cord," he complained. "The handcuffs will make a change at any rate."

With some difficulty Barnes contrived to unfasten the cord, the knots of which had been drawn tight by the chemist's struggles to free himself. Then considerately he began to chafe back some feeling into the other's hands.

"Now hold them out," he commanded, "and I'll slip on the darbies."

With a sudden unexpected movement Sinclair hurled the sergeant aside. Then, before anyone could lay a finger on him, he was through the doorway and racing down the garden path.

SHOWING the most amazing agility, he outdistanced all pursuit, and Kerle uttered a wail of rage and anguish when he saw him seize his beloved motor cycle and push off in a running start, flinging himself across the saddle as the powerful engine fired. Just as this happened one of the policemen got his hand to the carrier, but the sudden burst of speed dragged the machine from his grasp and flung him into the ditch.

There was a moment or two's inevitable delay before the chase was taken up. Fraser's own desire was to remain with Mary, but under the circumstances this was of course impossible, and he solved the problem by leaving the worthy Chubb in charge of her. Then he, Barnes, the two mobile police and Kerle piled into the police car and set out on the fugitive's track.

"We'll never catch up with him in this old rattle-trap," Kerle said disconsolately; "that bike of mine does ninety where the road allows."

"Well, we hung on to your tail, sir," the driver of the police car snapped, annoyed at the aspersion, "so perhaps we'll do the same with him. These lanes twist too much for him to let her out full for some time yet."

"He's making for Pranchester," Fraser shouted presently. "Some distance beyond that he'll strike the Great North Road, and then he'll give us the run of our lives. What's amusing you, Kerle?"

For the first time since they started, the lame man's chagrin had melted into a broad grin. But one of his irritating moods of secrecy was upon him, and he did not divulge the cause.

"Wait and see!" he yelled. And he continued to grin.

A sudden spurt along the wider road leading into the town allowed Sinclair to draw ahead a little.

"If he doesn't slacken speed through the town," Barnes muttered, "he'll hit something as sure as eggs are eggs."

"And smash up my bike, darn him," answered Kerle, his smile vanishing at the thought.

Scattering pedestrians in all directions, the motor cycle roared into the main street, and then just as an outraged constable made what would have been an abortive rush towards it, slowed down all at once with a great spluttering from the engine. Desperately Sinclair opened his throttle to its fullest extent. There was no answering burst of speed. Instead, it came to a virtual stop.

The traffic policeman's hand was on his shoulder when the rider leaped from the saddle, let the machine fall with a crash, twisted out of the constable's grasp, and took to his heels up a narrow alley. At the same instant the following car pulled up with a jar of brakes, and the policeman recognised its inmates with amazement.

"What's all this?" he gasped. "That was

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Mr. Sinclair, the chemist. Has he gone mad or what?"

"No," Kerle drawled, "merely met with a slight misfortune. His petrol tank's run dry. I was waiting for that to happen. I'd just remembered it was nearly empty."

"So that's what you were grinning about?" Fraser grunted. "Come on, you chaps, we've got him now."

But had he realised the desperate plan even then being formulated in Sinclair's mind, he would not have spoken so confidently.

WHAT followed will form a topic of Francheater conversation for many years to come. Sinclair's eyes as he ran through the alley were murderous, just as they had been when he had cast his noose over Ailing and broken the wretched doctor's neck. He cursed the mishap which appeared to render his final escape impossible bitterly as he went along. A pedestrian negotiating the alley from the opposite end took one look at the man racing towards him and then turned and fled.

The alley debouched into a narrow street, and almost opposite its mouth was an ironmonger's shop which just recently had commenced to sell other things besides ironmongery. Sinclair dashed across the street and disappeared within.

Fraser, leading the pursuit down the alley, came into view of the street and suddenly halted. Then he swung round to those behind him and shouted.

"Down! Down on your faces for your lives!"

Instinctively, everyone obeyed his word and action, and as they did so three quick shots in succession rang out, and they heard the bullets hiss down the alleyway above their heads.

Within the last few weeks, chiefly at Sydney Kerle's instigation, a miniature rifle and revolver club had been formed in Francheater, and there being no proper gunsmith in the town, pistols and rifles had been stocked by the ironmonger, into whose shop the hunted man had darted. Sinclair had had this fact in mind ever since the motor-cycle had conked out.

To spring into the shop and snatch up an automatic pistol and a box of cartridges displayed with it was the work of a moment, and he had just time to press three of the latter into the magazine before the pursuers came in sight. Fraser spotted him in the doorway with the levelled pistol just in time.

Feverishly reloading, the chemist fired again as, crouching low, the police retreated round a bend in the alley. This time he aimed lower, and a bullet came within an inch of Fraser's head.

"Let me get up in front and take a pot-shot at him," Kerle begged—owing to his lame leg he had been left behind in the rush down the alley—but the inspector put out a restraining hand.

"No," he said, "it's suicidal in this narrow passage. We'd better retreat and evolve some other plan to circumvent him."

With Kerle, "Belinda Jane" in his hand, acting as rearguard in case the pursued decided to become pursuer, they commenced to retire towards their car, and as they did so Sinclair, a sneer on his lips, moved forward. He calculated that he could prevent some of them reaching the other end of the passage alive.

He almost paid the penalty of ignoring Kerle's skill. As soon as he appeared in the opening the lame man fired, and, only the fact that Sinclair stumbled at the crucial moment in his haste prevented the fight from ending then and there. With the shriek of the bullet in his ear, he doubled back to the shelter of the shop.

Therein all was now consternation. The proprietor, an elderly man, and his two assistants were dumbfounded at the proceedings of what up to now they had regarded as a respectable fellow tradesman. At Sinclair's reappearance they all three incontinently dived behind the counter.

Sinclair's lip curled afresh. He picked out another pistol, loaded it, and filled his pocket with cartridges. Then he went to the door again and looked up and down the street.

It was empty. The shots he had fired had cleared it as effectively as a giant broom sweeping from end to end could have done. Shop doors were hastily being closed by terror-stricken traders.

But if the street itself was deserted commotion soon showed itself at either end. As news spread of what was afoot crowds gathered, and amongst them the desperado could see the helmets and uniform of the local police. They were out of range, but a tentative advance on his part seemed to indicate that he was considering shooting his way through them. Then he altered his mind and with a shrug of his shoulders turned back into the shop. And as he did so three heads which had cautiously re-emerged in the hope that he had gone, knocked themselves together in the haste with which they were withdrawn.

Ignoring them as before, Sinclair collected yet more cartridges and strode through the shop to where a staircase led to the ironmonger's bachelor quarters above. This he ascended, walked coolly into the dining-room, and seated himself at the window which overlooked the street.

ABOUT the first person Fraser met after he and his little force had reached the other end of the passage was Superintendent Cross, who was only too glad to get a reliable account of what really was occurring. He frowned when told where Sinclair was.

"He'll have a veritable arsenal at his command," he commented, "unless old Tancy, the ironmonger, and his assistants manage to get the upper hand of him, and that's too much to expect. I only hope none of them come to harm at his hands. Well, we know where he is at any rate, and the first step is to isolate the street."

His recent experiences with the strikers stood him in good stead, and he acted promptly, throwing a cordon of police across each end, which, although it served its purpose, had the effect of using up nearly all the men at his disposal.

"Now what?" he asked grimly, when this had been done. "Mr. Kerle there's got his pistol, and I've got a revolver at headquarters, and that's about all the armament we can muster except a sporting gun or two. Pity this isn't a garrison town. We'd have our own little Sidney Street battle, then."

"I think," Fraser suggested, "it would be better to try sweet reasonableness first. One doesn't know who may be hit once bullets start flying about, usually perfectly innocent persons who have nothing to do with the affair. I'll stroll along by myself and see if I can persuade him to surrender. He's hardly likely to shoot me down in cold blood if I show him I'm unarmed."

Cross looked dubious, and Kerle protested vehemently.

"If you expect any chivalry from him," he asserted, "you're much mistaken. I've experienced his methods, and I know. If you go, I go, too, as bodyguard. Then at the slightest sign of any monkey business I'll fire."

They argued for a few minutes before Fraser got his way. He walked quietly down the street alone, watched by Sinclair from his window, and as he drew nearer held his arms wide to signify that he carried no weapon. Whereupon, to his inward relief, the chemist ostentatiously laid down his pistols on the window-ledge.

But when the inspector called upon him to surrender, pointing out that it could be only a matter of time before he was recaptured, he replied with a volley of vituperation that need not be recorded, during which he made it clear that unless Fraser departed at once the tacit truce between them would end.

Seeing that further argument was useless, the Scotland Yard man turned on his heel, uncomfortably aware of the target he would present before he got out of range. A shot indeed did ring out, and a bullet sang over his head, but it was obviously merely a gesture of defiance and not specifically aimed at him.

On his rejoining the others a further council of war was held, attended this time by Major Tate, the Chief Constable, whom a telephone call had brought to the scene.

"That was a plucky act of yours, Fraser," he said warmly, "but I expect we'll have to rush him by numbers or shoot him in the end. It's going to be the deuce of a job, though, and I think I better get some more police drafted in from neighboring towns."

"Maybe that won't be necessary, sir."

Tate swung round to find Tancy, the elderly ironmonger, by his side.

"Hullo," he exclaimed. "We were anxious about your safety, Mr. Tancy."

"Not half so anxious as I was," the ironmonger smiled, "but when that mad devil went upstairs I and my assistants slipped out at the back and through my garden into another street. What's wrong with Sinclair? Gone off his onion, I suppose?"

"He hasn't that excuse, I'm afraid. To put it in a nutshell, Sinclair's a pretty desperate criminal."

The ironmonger pursed up his lips.

"You don't say so! And I always thought him so meek and mild. Well, I think I can show you a way to take him in the rear—over the roofs—but it'll need two or three armed and determined men."

He outlined his scheme, and Fraser stepped forward.

"This is my job, sir," he said firmly. "After all, I'm here to get the Brimley Parva murderer. And this time, Kerle, I won't turn down your assistance if you care to come."

"I'm with you," Kerle said simply, and Cross thrust the revolver he had just fetched from the station into Fraser's hand.

WHILE the police made a preconcerted demonstration as if intending to advance along the street overlooked by Sinclair's window, Fraser, Kerle, Barnes, and a constable were taken a round-about route by the ironmonger, which eventually got them into the house ad-

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joining Tancy's premises by the back door.

"A trap leads on to the roof in all these houses," their guide explained. "You can get through that and then through a similar one giving access to my top landing. I won't presume to instruct you what to do afterwards, and can only wish you luck."

Fraser thanked him warmly. He had no intention of leading unarmed men to tackle Sinclair, so after explanations had been made to the owner of the premises they had invaded he ordered Barnes and the constable to remain in the garden in case the fugitive made a break for liberty, and climbed with Kerle through the trapdoor leading to the roof.

Sinclair, meanwhile, watched the police movements with contemptuous eyes, telling himself that if they ventured down the narrow street he held them at his mercy. With a couple of automatics he could cause a shambles in a very few minutes, and as things were he had no compunction about shedding more blood. He regretted now not having shot Fraser. They could only—if they caught him—hang him once.

All at once his attention quickened and his frame grew taut. It appeared to him that those behind the first line of police were gazing, not down the street, but into the air. He mouthed a curse, suddenly understanding. It was not the air they had under observation but the roof!

A trapdoor in the ceiling caught his eye at once. Footsteps padded round it, and as he watched it opened slightly.

With lips drawn back in a snarl and levelled pistol, he crouched in a corner waiting for someone to appear. Fortunately Kerle, who was raising the trap, caught sight of him just in time and let it drop back into position with a thud.

Sinclair fired, nevertheless, the bullet from the heavy automatic smashing through the woodwork of the door. Immediately there came a cry of anguish and the chemist smiled in evil fashion. His bullet, it appeared, had found its mark.

For a little while longer he remained where he was. Staggering footsteps sounded above, followed by a groan. Then there was silence.

Nor, though he still waited, was it broken again, and at length he decided that he must take the initiative. In his absence from the window the police might be advancing down the street. But he dared not return to the window until he had cleared up the situation on the roof.

In a corner of the landing stood a broom belonging to the ironmonger's general servant, who, on catching sight of Sinclair, had locked herself in a bedroom and hidden in a wardrobe in fear of her life. He used this now to push up the trapdoor a few inches, his pistol held ready in his other hand.

When nothing happened he pushed it open wider, then lowered it again, replaced the broom, and commenced to ascend the flight of wood steps leading up to it and the roof. On reaching the trap, he raised it with his hand and peered cautiously through.

The roof was flat, with a low stone parapet running round its edge. On this parapet, above the street, he saw a man's hat, a trail of blood leading to it from the trap. There was no sign of anyone on the roof.

Once more his lips parted in that snarling grin. Whoever had lifted the trap, he decided, must have received his bullet, staggered to the parapet, and fallen into the street below.

Hesitating no longer, he wormed himself through the opening, and took the direction indicated by those bright red drops of blood.

SYDNEY KERLE, directly he had dropped the trap and the chemist's bullet had come crashing through, uttered a cry which made Fraser glance at him in consternation. He was reassured by a wink and a grin strangely at variance with the sound just emitted, and felt himself dragged behind a large chimney stack not far away.

"He's just underneath the trapdoor," Kerle whispered. "We've got to lure him out."

He stood thinking for a moment, and then staggered back to the trap, where he groaned loudly. Taking out his pocket-knife, he deliberately inflicted a small gash upon his hand, allowing the blood to drop on the zinc roof as he continued his stumbling progress to the parapet, where he placed his hat. After which he wound his handkerchief round his hand and tip-toed back to his companion.

"By Jove," Fraser said with admiration, "you do things thoroughly at any rate. It's a good idea if it works."

It did work, as we know. Sinclair had reached the parapet and was peering over when the two men stepped out from behind the stack.

"Hands up!" Fraser ordered. "We've got you now!"

But they were dealing with an utterly desperate man. Realising how he had been tricked, the chemist swung round, and as he did so his pistol hand came up. Fraser, whose desire it was to capture him alive, hesitated; a hesitation that might have cost him his life but for Kerle's rapidity of thought and aim. Two weapons spoke. But Kerle's a fraction of a second sooner. The pistol fell from Sinclair's smashed fingers as his bullet went wide, and, his features contorted with agony, he turned with the evident intention of hurling himself into the chasm of the street.

This time the inspector fired, aiming low, and with a bullet through the back of the knee, the fugitive pitched full length upon the roof. He still fought vainly when the two men reached him, only to collapse in the end from exhaustion and loss of blood.

He was unconscious when Fraser signalled their victory to the police below.

LATER in the day, Fraser and his wife and Sydney Kerle foregathered in a private room in the Crown and Anchor at Brimley Parva, Mary after a good sleep already showing few signs of her night's ordeal.

Her husband and Kerle had given each other an account of their respective experiences during the period of their separation before her arrival, but when she came in she demanded to hear the whole story.

"Geoffrey's scrappy letters," she complained, "haven't given me much idea of it so far."

"My scrappy letters!" he echoed in mock indignation. "I like that. You forget, young lady, I have to send full reports of my activities to the Yard, and that the grass hasn't exactly grown under my feet since I've been here. You've been very lucky to get any letters from me at all."

"Oh, all right," she laughed, "don't get stuffy about it. You never can write a decent letter, anyway. But enough of these domestic differences. They're boring Mr. Kerle."

"There's one thing Kerle knows now, at any rate," Fraser replied. "The identity of the murderer."

"Sinclair?"

"Yes, Sinclair; he's made a full confession, and when he's recovered from his wounds he'll have to stand his trial, and no doubt he will eventually pay the full penalty."

"I've felt pretty sure about him since last night," Kerle stated, "but you, Fraser, got on his trail, it appears, long before I did. I'd like to know how you managed it."

"In that case then I'd better tell you how matters struck me from the first and let people and events slip into their proper places as I go along.

"At first—In the matter of Patience Cartwright—I confess I was entirely in the dark. There seemed no particular reason why anyone should wish to kill so inoffensive a woman. Someone had, though, and I admit that Amelia's nocturnal wanderings and so forth gave me furiously to think. But somehow, as you know, I couldn't see her as the murderer—I still feel sure I summed up her character and actions with reasonable accuracy—and I was not shaken by her "confession," which had too many holes in it, or so it appeared to me. When Colonel Warman was killed and I found no allusion to this in the document, I was certain that we had to look elsewhere for the criminal.

"There was one thing I had spotted with regard to Patience Cartwright. Her neck had been dislocated after the fashion of strangulation practised by the Thugs of India—a case very early in my career had brought me some knowledge of this. The same applied to Warman's end. This crime also spoke of thugee—the silent whipping of a cord round the throat of the victim and the dislocation of the neck by a dexterous twist of the garotter's wrist. Warman had lived many years in India. Was there any significance in that?

"My interview with Mrs. Warman made me think there might be. I deliberately asked her if she knew of any event in his past which might be connected with his death, and although she assured me that she didn't I sensed a certain hesitation—the hesitation of a woman, let me add, who did not wish something to come out that might be prejudicial to her husband's good name and which she genuinely believed could have had nothing to do with the crime. I determined to probe further.

"From General Franklin I obtained some unexpected information. There had been an episode—a disgraceful one—in Warman's past life in which a native woman had been involved. What, I asked myself, had happened to the son of this illicit union? Suppose that he, a half-caste recognised by neither black nor white, had grown up to hate his father's name, perhaps to plot and carry out vengeance? You see the inference?

"For the first time I began to hope I might be on the right track, especially when I learned that the Cartwrights were distant relatives of Colonel Warman. Without the emergence of this last fact it would have been difficult to link up the death of Patience with my theory.

"The Avenger's first letter spoke of a forthcoming third victim, and when Kerle and I found Amelia dead, I felt sure that it was she. His second letter showed that it would have been had not her suicide forestalled him.

"This appeared to strengthen my hypothesis, and I cast about in my mind for anyone with whom I had come in contact locally who might have black blood in his veins. At once I thought of Sinclair, whose sing-song intonation had arrested

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my attention on my first meeting with him after the attempted robbery of his till. Then I had put him down as Welsh, but it seemed to me now that, in conjunction with his dark complexion, it might bear a more sinister interpretation. It was a long and so far uncorroborated shot, I admit, but I made a mental note to keep my eye both on him and Dr. Ailing, who had bobbed up mysteriously here and there and in whose veins, Sinclair told me, there ran dark blood —a false move on his part, for it made me more suspicious of himself."

"I therefore," Fraser continued, "drove up to Town and got in touch with the Indian police authorities, asking them, if they could, to trace what happened to Colonel Warman's illegitimate son in later years. Incidentally, I also ferreted into Ailing's antecedents and satisfied myself that Sinclair's statement regarding his blood was false.

"The Indian police promised to do what I asked, but in the meantime the desire to test my 'hunch' regarding Sinclair was too strong for me, and I had him sent an anonymous letter informing him that I was on his track. If he were innocent he would almost certainly take it to the police. If not, it struck me that I might personally look out for squalls, and to aid and abet these I moved into Rose Cottage, with the result that I had a somewhat startling visitor, whom I put down to being Sinclair himself.

"My dash over to Franchester dispelled this idea, but the word 'confederate' soon whispered itself in my ear. When I heard that the chemist had taken the letter to Superintendent Cross next morning, I felt more convinced than ever that he was in the plot. Finding his plan to kill me miscarry, he was belatedly trying to set himself right with the local police. As a result, I got a terrific telling-off from the superintendent, who reported me for incompetence to the Chief Constable.

"Before the latter could take any action, however, I was decoyed down to the house-boat by Ailing, whose part in affairs will be made clearer later, destined for a quick and watery grave. Only the cupidity of 'Brown,' whose real name we may never learn, and later on the heroic conduct of Meighan—who, you will be glad to hear, is to be suitably rewarded—preserved me from this. Kerle, meanwhile, was having his own adventures.

"I got back to Brimley Parva to find, to my great joy, that the expected Indian police answer to my inquiries had arrived. Armed with this, I bearded the Chief Constable in his den. I knew I hadn't anything to fear from him now. Both he and Cross were astounded at the information it disclosed, and agreed that action must be taken at once.

"Thorough people, the Indian police, and their report exceeded my expectations. Under the name of Baqa Ali, Warman's son had grown to manhood with a hatred against his father and the white race in general. Joining up with the extremists, he had got into trouble several times for uttering threats as to what would happen to the colonel if they ever met, and for taking part in riots. Then, all at once, as if seeing the error of his ways, he had settled down to be a respectable member of the community, studied chemistry, and taken over the pharmacy of another half-caste trading under the name of Thomas Sinclair. Finally he had sold this and sailed, they believed, for England about six years ago, since when they had heard nothing of him.

"This was good enough. Under the circumstances, that name Thomas Sinclair couldn't be mere coincidence. I decided that the chemist was undoubtedly my man, and obtained a warrant to search his flat. When Barnes and I reached it we found that he had already departed for his cottage in the country—not that we knew where he was then, of course. But we came across a couple of significant clues: a torn pair of flannel trousers into which the fragment I retrieved from Warman's rain-pipe fitted, and a woman's handbag stamped with the initials, 'P.C.' When we got back to Brimley Parva, you, too, were missing, Kerle, but turned up almost immediately with news that absolutely staggered me—that Mary had become involved in the affair. The rest you know, so I will come now to Sinclair's own account. It is a long and rather involved statement, so the gist of it will be sufficient.

"He confirms what General Franklin told me—that his mother was strangled by her husband for the disgrace she had brought upon her family. He himself was reared in an atmosphere of hatred to all things English, and always before him was the intention of one day causing Warman to die the same death as his mother had died. With this object in view, he settled down to apparent respectability after a wild youth, and eventually came to England and bought the pharmacy at Franchester, having previously elicited that Colonel Warman and his own surviving relatives were living at Brimley Parva, five miles away. Even then he let six years go by before he acted, in order that his past might still further be forgotten. The patience of the East, remember, was in his blood.

"But he never forgot his mission, as he calls it, the extirpation of Warman and his relatives—Mrs. Warman, with an unexpected sense of justice, he omitted from his scheme, considering her more sinned against than sinning. Tragically for her, he spotted poor Patience Cartwright going to the fields, and followed her. His cord was in his pocket, and he wantonly strangled her.

"Afterwards, seeing a man's figure, as he thought, slipping away into the darkness, he followed it to Frame Cottage, and only then detected it as Amelia dressed as a man. To that fact she owed her life. Had he recognised her before he would have killed her, too, as he meant to do eventually.

"He didn't know it then, but there had been a witness to the actual murder—Dr. Ailing—who was cutting back across the fields from one of his cases. Instead of denouncing the criminal, he proceeded to blackmail him—in fact, the story Sinclair told you, Kerle, was about correct, if the two chief characters in it were reversed. Ailing no doubt went to the cottage last night to demand more money, and suffered the penalty. I don't think we need shed more tears over him than over Sinclair.

"Incidentally Sinclair explains how Barnes and I came to find Ailing lying by the roadside that night. Having just escaped being captured by Kerle and me after attacking Amelia, he was pedalling home for dear life on his cycle—handier under the circumstances to use and conceal than his car—when he overtook Ailing, whom he promptly knocked out with the butt of his air-pistol for three reasons: (a) because if there was a hue-and-cry over the attack on Amelia he didn't want the doctor to know he was in the vicinity and thus have a further hold over him; (b) to delay any pursuit there might be—which it did; (c) sheer spite. He then threw his pistol into the brook, where P.C. Chubb found it later—I have just managed to trace the weapon as his by its number—and turned up a side lane which took him into Franchester by a roundabout route, and explains why we didn't overtake him.

"Later on he killed Colonel Warman, climbing up that rain-pipe, as I suspected, after an abortive attempt to strangle him in the orchard. Amelia was next on his list, had she not died by her own hand.

"His 'mission' completed, he would have stopped then—indeed he left a note to say so—had I not forced his hand. Deciding that I knew too much, he made up his mind that I must be eliminated, too. Knowing himself to be suspected, however, he employed a substitute to do the job, an Indian with Afghan blood in his veins, who employed a method practised on the North-west Frontier, removing his clothes and greasing himself all over so as to be able to wriggle out of anyone's grasp.

"That attempt, because I was ready for it, proved a failure, a rather amusing minor casualty again being Ailing, who guessing that Baqa Ali, or Sinclair as we'll continue to call him, meditated an attack on me—I had talked about my removal to Rose Cottage in his presence—was sneaking round to see what he could see when he encountered the nude gentleman in full flight, with unfortunate results to himself. His story about a bet was of course a myth.

"That he was pressed for money, however, was true enough, and his discomfiture at my questions regarding his visits to Town was due to the fact that these had been for the purpose of paying off, or rather partially paying off, a moneylender with cash extracted from the chemist. He, too, imagined that I was beginning to learn too much, so that he readily lent himself to the scheme of decoying me to the house-boat, owned of course by Sinclair under the name of Philip Thompson, after the fiasco at Rose Cottage, afterwards driving my car miles from the scene and abandoning it.

"For reasons already stated, this second attempt to kill me failed, and when Sinclair learnt this fact from the native, who had stayed long enough to see Meighan save me, he played his last desperate card, telephoning to Mary in the name of Superintendent Cross to meet me at his cottage, meaning to barter her life for his freedom, a plan that was providentially upset by Kerle."

The lame man shrugged his shoulders.

"I'm not so sure," he said. "I'm afraid I played a sorry part. It was Mary's pluck and resource that defeated him in the end."

"That it wasn't!" she disclaimed. "That North-west Frontier beauty would have finished me but for your wonderful shot, Mr. Kerle, which got him through the forehead. It's you I have to thank for my life, as once before."

"And I also for mine," Fraser added gravely, "in that episode on the roof."

Kerle, normally not the most bashful of men, blushed like a girl. He glanced at the clock.

"Opening time, you people," he stated hurriedly. "What about a spot of beer?"

THE END

(All characters in this novel are fictitious, and have no reference to any living person.)

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